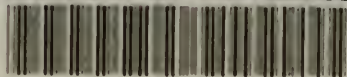


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Old Good-by's and Howdy-do's

By

John D. Wells

Author of "Swazy Folks"

With drawings by
Lester J. Ambrose



Buffalo, N. Y.
Otto Ulbrich Co.
1911

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No. 1

To

MY MOTHER

THIS LITTLE BOOK OF VERSE

IS AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED



AUTHOR'S NOTE.

To the courtesy of the following publications the author is indebted for permission to reprint the verses in this volume :

Lippincott's Magazine, *Harpers' Weekly*, *Judge*, *Delineator*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Designer*. Also to Mr. EDWARD H. BUTLER, owner and proprietor of the *Buffalo Evening News*, for whose publication many of them were written.

. . . They are sweet inside. I would rather have done them, or have the fine inner integrity to have done them—than to be Canal-Builder or Master of pan-Continental Air-lanes. They restore and brighten the deep places. . . . And when you put them by, and fall to dreaming among the ineffable partings and greetings that have been . . . stealing away after some pale vision or lustrous wing of remembrance . . . pray, don't hurry back, for you may be drawing very close to Yourself—the Kingdom of Heaven which lies within.

WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT.

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Old Good-by's and Howdy-do's

AN APPRECIATION.

OL' Home Folks! It 'pears you 're jist
Happiest an' bizziest
Fixin' up t' welcome in
Some one comin' home agin!
Some ol' codger, like as not,
That has mebbe plumb fergot
You—an' folks fergot him too!—
Ever' one exceptin' you!

Rassle out his easy chair,
Put it by the fire there
Where he used t' set, an' git
His ol' footstool out an' fit
Things in same ol' order most
Like he used t' have 'em, so's't
When he shucks his boots he kin
Say: "I jucks, I 'm home agin!"

Ol' Home Folks! I tell y' what,
I 've done heaps o' travellin' but

An Appreciation

Layin' 'side all sorts o' jokes,
If there 's any class o' folks
Measure up t' God's idee
Of what man had orter be—
Meets requirements through an' through—
Then, I jucks, that class is *you!*

MY PIPE.

[ASK no better friend, my pipe, than you have been
to me,
Or truer one to lean upon in dark adversity;
When cheer abounds and living teems with love and
laughter true,
Of all of those I count my friend I rather smile with
you.

The things I like, you too, prefer; how oft you've
shown your praise
When I have left the open road and sought the wood-
land ways
Where breezes wave a green baton for singers red as
flame—
In music as in other things our taste is much the
same.

In books, as well, our loves are like; how pleasantly
you've glowed
As clinging to Mulvaney's hand we've trod the Bar-
racks Road,
Or gone with Field to Sabine Farm and lands of
"Just Pretend"—
Whatever faults you have you choose the best of
books, my friend.

A life of sweet companionship with not a thing to
mar—

No quarrel, words, or differences to leave a single
scar—

No poor regrets for what has passed or what our
futures hold,

But solace in the thought that we, together, shall
grow old.

I always crave your fellowship until the end of day
When comes the pattering of feet from out the bed-
room way,

The time for fun, the time for love, when pudgy hands
caress—

The only rivals for my heart that you, my pipe,
possess.

DAYTIME IN MAYTIME.

DAYTIME in Maytime—it holds y' like a fetter!
Every day a perfeck one *excep' the next one's better!*

World a-smilin', fresh an' new, an' all per-fumed with
clover,
Pepp'mint an' pennyroyal that 's sproutin' up all over.

Daytime in Maytime, so dreamy-like an' lazy—
Things enough t' think about t' drive a feller crazy!
Time for ploughin', seedin' down—I railly should begin
it,
Where 's the man kin do it, though, *an' take an interest
in it?*

Daytime in Maytime! It seems a feller orter
Stake a claim beside the crick an' lay an' watch the
worter
Slippin' on, an' wavin' to him whilst it 's loafin' by
him—
Mebbe see a pick'url "break" an' cast a hook an' try
him!

Daytime in Maytime! Oh, where 's the equal of it?
Orter shet my teeth I s'pose, an' *cuss* instead o' *love* it,

'Cause no matter what I plan that even *seems like*
workin',
May comes on an' teaches me the gentle art o' shirkin'!

Daytime in Maytime! I'll sacrifice my Duty—
Gladly—on the altar place of May's eternal beauty!
Every day that follers on is brighter than the past
one—
Every May that comes along is better than the last
one!

“AFTERWHILE.”

“AFTERWHILE” we say, an’ sit
Musin’-like an’ dream of it—
Thinkin’ what we ’ll be an’ do
“Afterwhile” when dreams come true,
Foolin’ our fool selves, y’ see—
Humanlike—with that idee
That the afterwhiles are best,
Hullsomest an’ happiest.

Ain’t no blame attached t’ none—
That ’s what folks have allus done,
Drempt about their afterwhiles,
Rubbed their hands an’ forced their smiles
Childish-like, an’ I allow
Never stopped t’ think of how
“Afterwhile” ’s the saddest word
That a mortul ever heard!

“Afterwhile” when spring comes on,
Orchard blossoms come an’ gone,
Summer gloamin’s, shadders, too,
Breathe of age to me an’ you!—
Then our eyes won’t be so bright,
Nor so keen to sense delight—

“Afterwhile”

Things will be more common, and
Like enuff look *second hand*!

“Afterwhile” my child, y’ see,
You won’t be the same to me—
We can’t never romp nor play
Like we used t’ do, nor say
“Squidum rhymes” er tromp an’ shout,
’Count o’ bein’ *talked about*!
Afterwhiles? My law, they jest
P’vent the didoes we like best!

“Afterwhile” an’ then it seems
Life consists of dreamin’ dreams—
Dreams of things we did n’t do,
Yes, an’ vicy-versy, too!
No sir-e-e-e, I ’lectioneer
For the whiles that ’s *now* an’ *here*—
Would n’t swap their cheer an’ smiles
For *etarnal* afterwhiles!

APPERTAININ' TO YOUNG 'UNS.

YOUNG 'uns! Ain't they jest the wors'!
Lawsey me, I gess there jest
Ain't none in the Universe
Nowise diffurnt from the rest!
Swanny, I ain't never saw
Young 'uns eat—an' ain't it queer?—
'Thout they 'd cry an' holler "Ma
Did n't put no sugar *here!*"

Never saw a young 'un yit,
Gals or boys or ennything—
Speshully boys—that did n't git
Idée in his head 't was spring
Jest as soon as snow was gone!
Lawsey, but they kick a row,
All their teasin', takin' on:
"Ma kin I go barefoot now?"

I don't s'pose no parunts live
But have put their tikes t' bed,
Taught 'em how t' be fergive,
Tucked 'em in from heels t' head,
Then gone out, an' bimeby
Jest as they got ripe t' think,
Heerd them dadburned young 'uns cry
"Pa," or "Ma, I want a drink!"

SUNDAY THOUGHTS.

SUNDAY, in the city, with its fine display an'
show—

Ain't it different from the Sunday that the country
people know!

Different—oh, so different!—is its hurry an' its rush,
From the simple, holy silence an' the God-inspired
hush

Country folks remember, who have up an' moved t'
town,

An' it makes us sort o' lonesomelike when Sunday
comes aroun';

Luggin' in your fashions, an' your doin's, seems so
odd,

Like a worldly grant t' Satan an' a compermisc with
God.

Sunday in the city! Why, there 's nary bell or chime
That a man can tune his heart with when it comes t'
meetin' time!

Not a sound, I reckon, turnin' worldly thoughts away,
Makin' Sunday any different from most any other day!
An' your city "meetin'"! Do y' s'pose your hired
choir

Sings their music any sweeter or their anthems any
higher

Than the village singers who are only volunteer?—
Do y' s'pose that God don't listen 'cause they only
sing by ear?

Sunday in the country! Can't y' hear the meetin'
bells

Ringin' out upon the mornin', and the message that
each tells?—

How the feast is waitin' an' the holy bread is broke
An' the speerit waits communion with the honest,
simple folk?

Can't y' hear the singin' an' the long endurin' prayer,
An' the lazy bees a-dronin' through the open windows
there?

Can't y' see the parunts with their young 'uns in be-
tween?

Can't y' hear the swish an' rustle of some ancient
bombazine?

City an' the country! Oh, we 've always been apart!
An' it ain't so much, I reckon, in the standards of our
heart

As it is in habits; why, I believe we both are good
An' we 'd like each other better if we only understood.
I ain't criticisin' how you keep your Sabbath days,
For I s'pose the Lord considers that it 's city folkses'
ways,

But I can't help a-thinkin' you 'd be glorified and
blest

By a Sunday in the country with its holiness an' rest.

A YOUNG 'UN IN POKEBERRY TIME.

GIVE me the knack an' the power t' rhyme
The face of a young 'un in pokeberry time—
Some sort o' rhyme that 'll picture him there,
His round bullet head an' his tow-colored hair,
Eyes filled with fun 'til they brim like a cup,
A nose that is freckled an' sort o' pinched up,
Mouth stretched in smiles like a circus show clown,
All pokeberry stain an' the juice runnin' down.

Give me a song that 's as honest as his—
A song that 'll sing of the boy as he is,
Just as he is, with the grime an' the dirt
An' pokeberry juice on his "hickory" shirt—
Juice on his chin an' his nose an' his ears,
An' juice in his hair, but there 's nobody keers!
Pirate of Boyhood a-lootin' the lands,
The guilt of the pokeberry's blood on his hands!

Give me a rhyme where there 's somewhere a word
As ringin' an' clear as his laughter I 've heard—
Somethin' 'twixt poetry, music, an' joy
As keerless an' real as a berry-stained boy—
Somethin' a feller kin weave int' rhyme
An' tell of a young 'un in pokeberry time!
Give me all these an' I 'll sing y', I jing,
A song sweet as ever a mortal kin sing!

OUR YESTERDAYS.

WE 've traced our sweetest dreams, my dear, in
yonder fire's glow,
And never thought the pictures there were of a Long
Ago;
Unmindful of the fleeting years we 've wandered on,
we two,
And you have been the same to me and I the same to
you—
Your voice as sweet and hair as jet as ever, till
to-night
I saw a single strand of gray reflect the ruddy light,
A single silvery strand of gray 't was burnished by the
rays,
And then I knew the time has come when we have
Yesterdays!

I had not ceased to think of you as blithe and young
and fair,
And I as strong and straight as when I waited on you
there,
Until to-night! Our youngest one sat here upon my
knee
And looked into my eyes for long and studied ear-
nestly,

Our Yesterdays

Then looked at you, and said at length—my heart was
fairly wrung!—

“I ’m trying to picture how you looked when she and
you were young!”

I tried to laugh it all away, but dear, through all the
haze

There came the thought, “The time has come when
we have Yesterdays!”

A CAVALRYMAN.

(A tale of a Southwest army post.)

THIS is a tale of a trooper, a fellow who had no
God—

Who earned his pay on a scrubby bay at the left of a
ragged squad:

Booted and spurred and cursing, with nary a thought
of good,

He made but one, as the rosters run, of the Fighting
Brotherhood.

Booted and spurred and cursing he cantered the
scrubby bay,

And none can tell of the desert spell that lured the
man away!

Back came the mare to her masters, free of her reins
and load,

And fast in the sheer of her saddle gear, a word from
the man who rode.

“Water—gone,” he had written: “I reckon I got t’
quit:

I did have some but the showdown come and the mare
was a-needin’ it!

Only—wanted—a—swallow t' cut out the dirt and
the sand—
I tried t' tell the critter but—hell!—she never could
understand."

Somewhere out in the Yonder, out on a scorching
clod,
He's gone to sleep in a sun-dried heap—the Fellow
Who Had No God!
Yet, when the judgment's passing and virtues no
more are dim,
I sometimes think that a man like this will stand at
the right of Him!

OLD GOOD-BYES AND HOWDY-DO'S.

THE old good-byes and howdy-do's!
Now *there* 's a theme to tax your muse
An' make it switch from tears t' smiles
An' back again to tears, the whiles;
No polished rhyme, but jist a strain
As soft an' low as Apurl rain,
That sings "good-bye" to kith an' kin—
Then change your tune t' Home Agin!

Oh, who can dream the sort o' rhyme
That sheds the tears of leavin' time?—
Good-bye t' mother, smutched with dough!—
The stanchest friend you 'll ever know!—
To home, to trees, the huntin' pup,
An' crimson ramblers climbin' up
To twist around the heart of you,
An' tighter than they *ever* do!

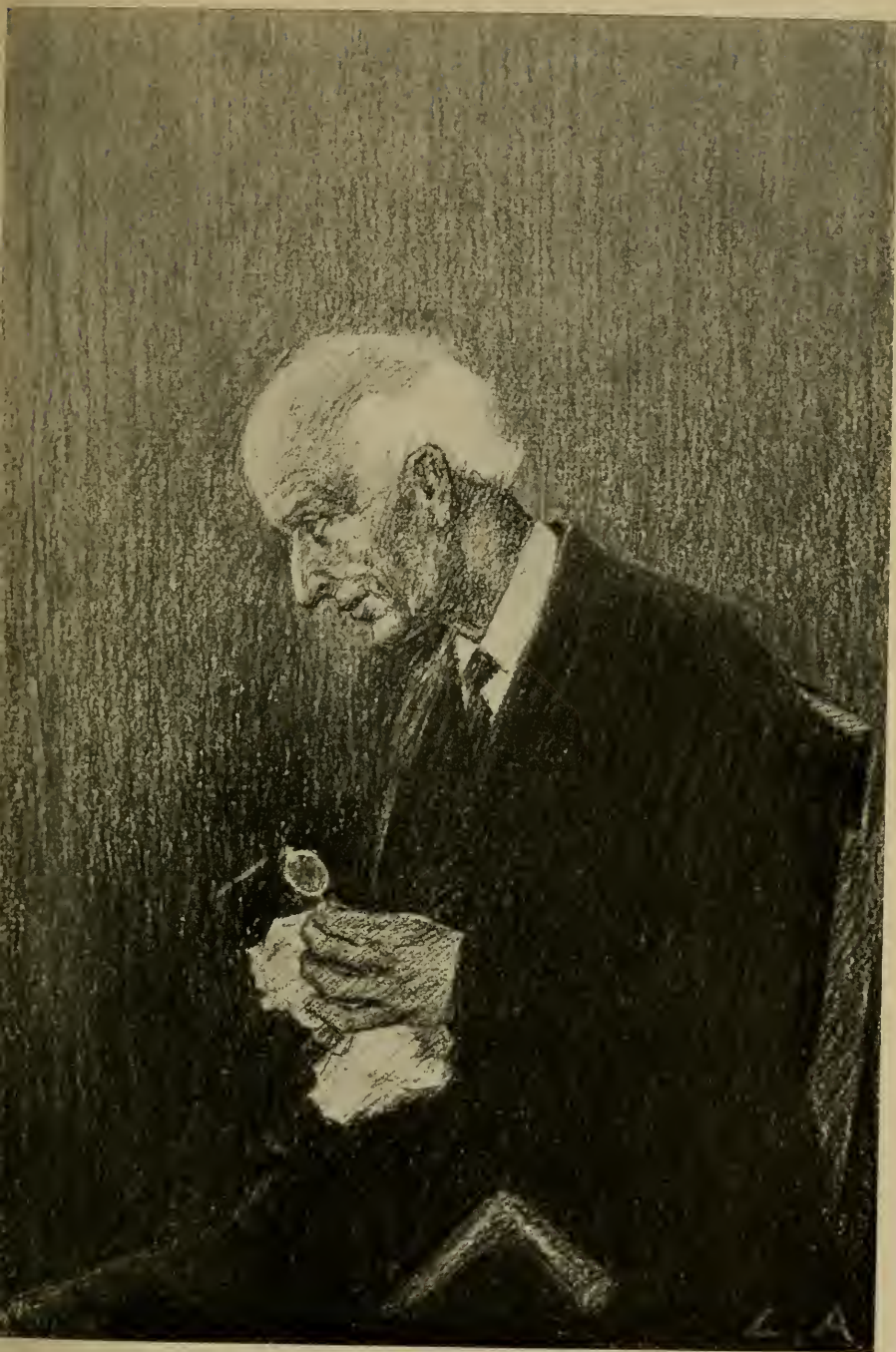
An' sing it soft an' low to fit
The partin' an' the pain of it!—
To fit the way a feller feels
When ol' familiar places steals
Apast him on the wagon road—
The boyhood spots he 's allus knowed!

18 Old Good-Byes and Howdy-Do's

An' make the tear that 's in his eye
To rhyme a feller's last "good-bye."

Then chuck a faster tempo in
To sing a feller Home Agin!—
Back home agin where he was riz
An' orter staid, as sayin' is!
His mother's greetin', father's too,
An' friends an' naybors' "Howdy-do!"
The extry chair an' table set,
That mother 's keepin' for him *yett*!

You poet chaps! You set an' dream,
An' seem t' think the only theme
That people like is in the skies!
Set down by me an' drop your eyes—
Ease off a while an' git your time
In perfeck pitch an' tune with mine,
Then try a sort o' keerless muse
On "Ol' Good-byes an' Howdy-do's."



“ My eyes ain’t as good as they was ”

MY EYES AIN'T AS GOOD AS THE I WAS.

OLD faces, old friends, an' old happiness, too,
Old haunts that I cherish an' love,
Old pleasures an' naybors an' folks that I knew
An' jist can't see anything of—
What 's come of 'em all? Ain't there none left a'tall?
Or mebbe it 's only because
It 's me that can't see 'em, for, donblame it all,
My eyes ain't as good as they was!

Old cronies and comrades! Oh, where have they gone?
It can't be they 've gone on before;
Why is it that none of 'em—nary a one!—
Comes down to the village no more?
I can't recollect seein' hide nor a hair
Of one of 'em! Mebbe it 's 'cause
I pass 'em an' prob'ly don't know who they air,
For my eyes ain't as good as they was.

I want to look into their faces once more,
An' feel all the heft of their hand,
An' talk about folks we remember before,
An' things that old men understand,
But—blame it, my eyes are a-runnin' again!
I reckon all old fellers' does
From bein' out in the wind, an'—an'—then
My eyes ain't as good as they was!

CHICK-A-REE CRICK IN PENNSYLVANY.

(After havin' got about tired waitin' fer some poet to come along an' sing about Chick-a-ree as it orter be sung, I 'm goin' t' try it myself in a sort o' keerless fashion.)

SLOPIN' banks of Chick-a-ree!—
Worter crawlin' slow an' free
'Twixt its flanks of velvet-fine
Tinted up with dandyline—
Past the willers, past the mill,
Fallin' over "Parkin's Spill"
Through the "narrers," tumblin' out,
Stoppin' there t' spin about,
Then t' rest an' listen to
Thrush's song or pigeon's coo;—
Shamin' mortul man a lot
With the happy way it 's got!

Injun name—first pioneer
Teamed it in an' settled here,
Heerd 'em call it "Chick-a-ree,"
Meanin' "worter runnin' free"—
"Chick-a-ree" we call it still,
An' I guess we allus will.

Chick-a-ree Crick in Pennsylvania 21

Runs so dreamylike an' slow,
Seems t' me that if y'd throw
Chip in there 't would foller straight
Where its dusky sponsors wait—
Through the woods an' on—an' on—
Where their birch canoes is gone!

Worter cold an' crisp an' clare,
Mirrorin' the pitchers there
Of the trees an' skies of blue,
An' the world it 's loafin' through—
Flashin' up, as like as not,
Pitchers that I 've nigh fergot—
Freckled boys with tousseled hair,
Used t' loaf an' peer in there!
Ever' ripple, pool, an' rift
Seems t' set my thoughts adrift—
Seems t' have peculiar knack
Of recallin' mem'ries back!

'T was n't made t' seine er fish—
Jest t' dream beside an' wish,
Jest t' lop beside an' stretch
Ol' roomatick bones, an' ketch
Speerit of this world o' His
Deeper than the worter is!—
Souise yer body in it, too—
Let it soak y' through an' through!
Ain't no dadburned poet's song
Half so sweet, ner half so long,
As the song o' Chick-a-ree
Singin' in the heart of me!

THE TOWN JOKER.

'BIDE APPLEBEE he sez t' me
A spell ago, he sez, sez he,
"What was it that you give your horse
The time it had the botts?" O' course
That bein' sort o' in my line
I sez, "I give him turpentine."

It run along fer quite a spell,
A month or mebbe more an'—well
One evenin' 'Bide come int' town
An' hitched his team an' settled down
In Parkin's store against a sack—
His face was long 's a wagon track!

"What was it, Hi," he sez t' me,
"You give your horse fer botts?" sez he;
"Jist turpentine," I sez, an' 'Bide
Sez, "So did I, but my horse died!"
"Well, so did mine," I sez, an' cussed
'F I did n't think them boys would bust!

“M-O-T-H-E-R!”

FIFTY times, or more, a day
Hear 'em call her thataway!—
Out t' play perhaps, or fetch
Kindlin' wood or mebbe ketch
Hens or shoo the turkey-cocks
Out o' reach o' chicken hawks;
Somethin' in their eyes, or got
Stung by wassups, like as not,
Fingers pinched, or gypsies nigh—
Anything that makes 'em cry
Sends 'em to the house from play—
First oddrotted thing they say
Is: “*M-o-t-h-e-r!*”

“Mother” this an’ “mother” that
'Til she don't know where she 's at
'Twixt her pans an' kittles and
Young 'uns all around her! “*Land,*”
She-says-she, “let up on maw!
Why not go an' ask your paw
Jest fer change?” an' then, blame-don,
Tells 'em how they 're wearin' on
Feelin's, nerves, an' ears an' sich,
“Mother'in'” every whip-an'-stitch!

"M-o-t-h-e-r"

Talks 'em quiet, purty nigh,
'Til she 's interrupted by
 "*M-o-t-h-e-r!*"

Yit, for all her takin' on
'Bout their pesterin', blame-don,
When they went with Uncle Joe
Up t' see the circus show—
First an' only day she jest
Railly *had* a chance t' rest!—
What 'd she do? She set an' set,
Handkerchuf jist wringin' wet;
"Give that quarter section there,"
She declared, "throw in the mare,
Heifers, too—an' grain—an' hay—
Jist t' hear one young 'un say:
 '*M-o-t-h-e-r.*'"

MAIRY ELLEN.

I WISH that some day God would put the magic in
my pen
To weave her beauty into rhyme, the way I saw her
then!

I wish He'd guide my pen t' write of Sunday afternoon
The way it used t' be at Jim's, all sunny sweet with
June,

Then help me trace the softest lines to pitcher Mairy
there

Before her ol' melodeum, as purty, sweet an' fair
As June itself outside the door—an' then, if it could be,
Would help me hum the song she played: "Then
You 'll Remember Me."

She wa'n't like others—Mairy wa'n't—"She's wilful,"
Jim would say;

She wore them highfalutin' things an' used t' play
crokay

An' go to dances like as not, or if some city chap
Come gallivantin' 'round perhaps she'd sort o' set her
cap

An' 'fore he knowed she'd ketch him too, an' shock
the nayborhood!

But, lawsy me, I never thought she's nothin' else but
good—

She had the stamp o' goodness on as any one could see
Who ever heerd her play an' sing "Then You 'll Remember Me."

It has been said the good die young an'—well, I guess
it 's so,

Else why would He take Mairy home before her time
t' go?

An' left her pa an' ma alone—all soul alone!—at hum,
To dream of Mairy Ellen there at her melodeum
A-singin' of them ol' time songs, like what she used t'
do,

That June an' all the world outside would stop an'
listen to!

An' through the tears that dim his eyes I reckon Jim
can see

Jist what she meant when Mairy sung "Then You 'll
Remember Me."

OLD JIM WADE.

(Somethin' about Old Jim Wade, veteran soldier, who drummed all through the army an' now he's drummin' for the Perry Cornet Band an' drummin' darned good yit!)

OLD Jim Wade of the First Dragoons!
He's still drummin' them army tunes,
Jist as lively an' jist as free—
Jist as grand as they used t' be!
Tunes the soldiers remembers yit—
Tunes recallin' the days they fit
Under the guidons of "Little Phil"
From Harper's Ferry t' Fisher's Hill.

Back when the nation was needin' sons
Most of 'em natcherly took t' guns,
'Ceptin' Jim an' he says—says he:
"I choose sticks an' a drum for *me*,"—
Took 'em, too, an' the old Dragoons
All remember his stirrin' tunes
Minglin' still with the battle shout
Drummin' blues an' the rebels out!

Peace come on an' the war's alarms
Come to end, an' they dropped their arms

Old Jim Wade

'Cordin' to orders—exceptin' Jim—
Said that it did n't apply to *him!*
He allowed that the terms that come
Did n't refer to a feller's drum!
Then he come home an' he turned a hand
Playin' the snare for the village band.

Nowadays when the band goes by,
Uniformed an' a-steppin' high,
They 're possessed of the fool idee
They're the attraction, but no sir-e-e-e,
People ginerally looks for Jim,
Realizin' they see in him—
Smallest man in the band, an' *last*—
The soul of battle a-marchin' past!

Like enuff when the Judgment 's come
They 'll be needin' a man t' drum—
Some one to lead all the shadow host
Of the boys that won an' the boys that lost;
Peter 'll summon him loud an' clear;
"Drummer Wade?" an' he 'll answer "Here!"
Then Peter 'll order, as stiff as starch;
"Hayfoot!—Strawfoot!—For'rd!—*March!*"

A PROTEST.

FOR thirty years now, come an' gone,
Since Elder Hawkins made us one,
I 've lived with ma, 'cept off an' on

When she 's been off a-visitun
Her fambly's folks at Turkey Hatch,
An ' left me home a-keepin' bach;
An ' all I 've got t' say for ma

I could n't write if I should try,
Her cookin'—kindness an '—my law

She 's raily saintly, mighty nigh,
Excep' her habit, that endures,
Of overdoin' fambly cures!

. . . Scorcht my pelt
With her mustard 'til I 've smelt
My past record! Then, blame-don,
Socked a cayenne plaster on
Small o' my back "because," says ma,
"Sometimes mustard fails t' draw!"
Soaked my feet in worter hot
'Nuff t' bile 'em, like as not!
Planked her flatirons 'round me too—
Liked t' burnt the covers through!
Gargled me with liniment
'Til I gagged an' felt content

A Protest

To forgit the ills I had
'Cause the cure was twice as bad!
Bled me! An' spread poultices
'Crosst my inn'ards 'til I jis'
Thinks: "Doggone it anyhow;
Wish old Gabe would trumpet now!"
Then the worst o' mother's faults
Follered after—Epsom salts!—
Jimmie-e-e, they allus spile
Fambly ties an' reconcile
Me t' death an' I-thinks-I
"Lord, thy servant 's drawin' nigh!"
When I git so weak an' pain
Racked that I jist can't complain
Ma she smiles an' whispers, "Wes,
Fever 's goin' down I guess—
Ain't no misery endures
'Gainst my good ol' fashioned cures."

Thirty years now, come an' gone,
She 's doctored me by fits an' starts,
With mustard plasters—off er on—
Er maybe somethin' else that smarts,
'Til I 'd give up a half I own
T' enjoy a sickness once—alone!

TEMPTED.

JUST to see the dawning of another country day,
Just to see the glint again on meadow grass and
clover,

Just to see the morning sun kiss all the dew away
And spread in golden patches all the smiling coun-
try over.

Just to tread the bank again where roguish waters pass,
Just to hear their music like a friendly fiddle play-
ing,

Just to be the target for a kill-dee's noisy "sass"
That nests among the branches of the leafy sumach
swaying.

Just to stretch my length again beside the fishing hole,
Somewhere in the silence where the stream has
ceased its prating,

Just to feel the thrill again along an alder pole
And meet the test of patience in the simple knack
of waiting.

Just to go and be a part of what I used to know,
Just to tune my heart again with summer's drowsy
humming—

This alone would tempt me to forget my task and go
When vagrant breezes whisper through my open
window: "Coming?"

HIPPERCRITS.

THE time we ast the preacher here fer afternoon
an' tea

My mother sed I had t' act as good as I kin be;
I had t' keep my necktie on an' ansur "mam?" an'
"sir?"

An' use my hankerchef without no reprimand from
her,

An' bow my head an' keep it bowed until "fer Jesus
sake,"

An' must n't ast fer sugar er anuther piece of cake,
An' be a little gennleman, an' nevur say a word
'Cause fellers 'bout the size o' me is seen an' never
heard.

An' ma she told my father 'at he 'd have t' polish up
His manners too, an' must n't stick his crackers in his
cup

Ner souse his bread in coffee like he allus likes t' do,
An' had t' keep his elbows off the dinner table, too,
An' had t' wear a napkin, an' not chuck it in his chin,
But lay it crossways on his lap an' stick a corner in—
An' lock the puppy in the barn because she did n't
keer

T' have no pup t' bother when the minister was here.

An' when the preacher got around that evenin' pa an'
me
Was 'zackly like she told us, jes' as good as we cud
be,
An' listened to him tell about "the hippercrits in
church
Who prey on holy people, an' who tarnish an' be-
smirch
The house of faith," an' give "the cause of piety a
taint
By tryin' t' make the world believe that they are what
they ain't";
An' ma an' pa agreed with him in ever'thing I guess,
'Cause ever'thing he sed to 'em the both of 'em sed
"yes."

An' when the preacher 'd gone away then ma she sed
t' me
T' come an' set beside her 'cause she sed she 'd like t'
see
How much attention I had paid, an' if I 'd paid a bit,
An' then she ast me out an' out "what was a hipper-
crit?"
I dun my best t' reckolect an' then I sed t' ma
"I reckon that a hippercrit is jest like me an' pa."

.
. An' ma she cuffed my head
An' pa gave me a wallop in' an' sent me off t' bed!

“JES’ ONE STORY MORE.”

“JES’ one story more,” they ’d say,
Hangin’ on me thataway
Bees does on a hollyhock
That they ’ve fairly *dreened*! I jock,
How they clumb around my chair,
Here an’ there an’ everywhere—
Bangin’ with their copper toes
’Gin my shins, an’ pullin’ nose,
Hair an’ whiskers—everything
That was *pullable*, I jing!
Dozen childern, big an’ small,
Hangin’ on me, beggin’ all
Fer “jes’ one story more!”

Drift o’ most the stories was
Natcherly, to’rds Sandy Claus—
Who he is an’ where he ’s from—
Where he lives when he ’s t’ hum—
Where he allus summers at—
Reindeers—toys—an’ sich as that,
’Til if blamed gran’ jury ’d knowed
They ’d o’ sent me over road—
Primy facy!—yes sir-e-e-e—
On a charge o’ perjury!

Yit I could n’t stop, y’ know,
 With the childern beggin’ so
 Fer “jes’ one story more!”

Now they ’ve all growed up an’ gone,
 An’, with Christmas comin’ on,
 ’Pears t’ me the house is jest
 Stillest-like an’ lonesomest
 House a body ever see!—
 Nothin’ but the clock an’ me!
 Law, the squeakin’ of my chair
 ’S loud enough t’ raise my hair
If I had some!
 An’ there ’s spells
 When, I swan, my wizzen swells
 Big ’s a body’s fist, an’ I—
 Like they used to!—almost cry
 Fer “jes’ one story more!”

TO A LITTLE BOY.

WAS n't it a funny dream? Worth a youngster's
laughter,
Thinking how you grew a man just a minute after
Mother tucked you snug in bed,
Kissed you and your prayers were said,
And you watched the kitchen light creep along the
rafter?—
Watched until your lids were sewed by Sleep's mys-
terious stitches,
Then, by some strange wizardry of goblins or of
witches,
Saw yourself a-standing there in coat and vest and
britches!

Was n't it the strangest thing, relieved of all the
bothers
Incident to growing up and wearing clothes like
father's?
All your curls were gone, it seemed—
Cut away!—and as you dreamed
You were just the way you 'd be if you could have
your rathers!
Gingham waists were cast away, ribbon bows and laces,

Sterner dress for grown-up folks had seemed to take
their places—

Just like really, truly men, with slivers in their faces!

Still, by far the oddest thing—I 'd scarcely think it of
you!—

Though you seemed to be at home with friendly skies
above you,

Mother love and kindness, too,

Still your fancy pictured you

Waiting at the gate to say good-bye to those who love
you!

Next you knew 't was day again and 'cross the fields
of daisy,

Buttercup, and dancing dew the light came soft and
hazy—

Mother kissed your tangled curls and robins chorused
“Lazy!”

Wasn't it a funny dream?—and so strange that mother
Listened to you tell of it then quickly found another
Theme for you to talk about;

Strange how father wandered out

All alone behind the barn, nor spoke to one another!

Yet it was a funny dream and doubtless when you
told her

Mother should have laughed instead of crying on your
shoulder—

Only mothers *never* do, you'll learn as you grow older!

H. SIMMS'S NEW DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

WE wondered an' wondered, his ma an' me,
What sort of a wife John's wife would be!
"She 's good an' purty," his letter read;
"But then, that 's natcherl," his mother said,
"That *he* should think her the finest gel
In all o' the world—but time will tell."
But, bein' that she was of city stock,
We sort o' felt that his choice might mock
Our simple ways an' our simple dress,
An' both of us sniffled a bit, I guess!

I *s'pose* we 'd orter o' fixed up some
Against the time that they said they 'd come—
We 'd orter o' shingled an' patched the fence,
An' painted the house that *ain't* been since
The flood I guess; an' I *s'pose* we 'd ort
O' got some carpets, an' tried t' sort
Ol' keepsakes out, such as pitchers and
Ol' lamberkins on the shelves an' stand,
An' hid 'em away, but no sir-e-e-e-e-e
"It would n't be *home* to John," says she.

An' fin'lly they come but law-my-law
The s'prisedest man that *ever* you saw



"H. Simms's New Daughter-in-law"

H. Simms's New Daughter-in-Law 39

Was your'n truly—*H. Simms*—because
The livin' spit of his ma, she was!—
With hair as fair an' with eyes as blue
As them I see when I 'm peekin' through
The passin' years into Mem'ry's haze
At ma an' me, in our courtin' days—
The same sweet smile an' the twinklin' fun—
An' kissed me, too, like his mother done!

I could n't ever fergit the drive
From depo' home again—sakes alive,
She 's out an' in an' out agin
Gatherin' blossoms an' daisies in
"T' take t' mother," she said, for all
As if ma did n't have none at all!
An' *anxious*? Law, she could skeersely wait
T' git t' ma at the lower gate,
An' kissed her cheeks an' she hugged her, too,
An' cried an' whispered "He looks like *you*."

.
He never *was* much of a hand for fuss
But I guess John 's purty nigh glad as us!

OL' DOC FOLINSBEE.

I 'VE allus thought some day I 'd take my pen in hand
an' see

'F I could n't write some fittin' rhyme on ol' Doc
Folinsbee—

A simple rhyme that Doc could read an' then could
take an' skim

The top off of an' underneath could find my love fer
him!

I 've done my best—er started to!—I 'll bet y' fifty
times,

But—well, I guess that Doc 's too big fer my poor sort
o' rhymes,

'Cause ever' time I 've tried my hand I 've stuck where
I began,

An' never got no further than “ol' Doc 's a friend t'
man——”

Fer forty years he 's held the fort around these Swazy
hills

An' flanked an' pecked the enemy with ever' sort o'
pills

An' poultices an' intments, too, an' “blisters,” land
o' love,

That no one 'ceptin' Doc hisself 's got any know-
ledge of!

Fer forty years he 's trundled 'round behind that ol'
bell mare

A-dosin' up a sick 'un here an' 'ficiatin' there

Where famblies was "a-addin' to"—why half the
village kit

Owed Doc a debt when they begun—an' parunts owe
him yit!

He never kep' no track o' things an' consyquences is
That he 's in ever'body's debt an' ever' one 's in his
'Bout twict as much as he 's in their 'n, an' here last
May er March

The Masons' Lodge they had t' meet—Doc bein'
Royal Arch—

An' 'greed t' back his note fer bills he owed t' Henry Oaks
The drug store man, fer medicines he 'd got fer other
folks!

But spite o' that no rivul kin put Doc up on the shelf—
They 've tried 'fore now but Swazy allus settles that
itself!

He ain't no speshul learned man, an' never kin be rich,
Ner ain't no honored "feller" in academies an' sich;
The "Secret" or the "Source o' Life" ain't bothered
him a bit—

He's spent *his* time, an' money, too, I 'low, perlongin' it,
An' kep' the township figgerin' an' wonderin' which
dos't,

His pills er good ol' hullsomeness, helps invulids the
most!

I guess the best that I kin do is let that one line stan',
It seems t' fit Doc Folinsbee, "He 's jist a friend t'
man."

BEN TARR ON EDUCATION.

[T ain't the things men learn in books that makes
'em tower up,
An' makes 'em swell, as feller says, a-like a pizened
pup;
It's what y' see an' profit by—the things o' common
sense—
That figger in the final run as things o' consyquence.

The smartest man I ever knowed knowed jist enuff t'
keep
About an inch er so beyant a mule's kickin' "sweep"—
He knowed enuff t' never wear a shirt of red, ner pull
Bandana out when crossin' lots where naybors kep' a
bull.

He knowed which was the lovin' ends o' yellor jacks
an' bees,
An' when a ram come at him there was virtue climbin'
trees;
He had them bits o' knowledge that no school per-
fessers git,
An' consyquences of it is the feller's livin' yit!

OLD CHUMS RE-UNITED.

“THE boy that used to sit with me”—
How many times, while musing, we
Have drawn the curtains back again
That hid from us the world of Then—
The curtains heavy with the grime
And dust of long forgotten time—
And necromancy brings to view
The boyhood world that once we knew!
The fields beyond the drowsy town,
The lawless rangers up and down
The river bank, or aiming where
The willows guard the pickerel’s lair;
The school—the glint of gingham frock,
The merry memories that mock
The years we’ve lost—the jackanapes!
Then—one of all—we seem to see
Among the merry, shifting shapes,
“The boy that used to sit with me.”

A careless goddess fashioned him,
Yet *perfectly* from flapping brim
To grimy heels! She touched his lips
With laughter sweet as honey-drips—
She touched his eyes with merriment,
And made his boyish heart the vent

For all that of itself must bless
The goddess and her carelessness!
He knew which fishing hole was best,
He knew the woods, the hangbird's nest;
By some device he used to call
The partridges and quail and all
The other birds that used to flee
At very sight of you and me!—
He knew the secrets of the trees
And foliage, and knew the soil
The mandrakes sought, and held the keys
To hoards of mint and pennyroyal.

"The boy that used to sit with me"
Came back last night! Together we
Pledged fellowship of Long Ago,
Yet sat apart like strangers, so
Unlike was he! I, tempted some,
To chide the fates that stole my chum
Who "spit between his teeth and swam
Three times across the Kittery Dam
Then back again"—a record then!—
And brought him back to me again
In specs—*and bald!* It is not strange
A fellow's chum resents the change!
'Til, tempered by the mellow wine,
I searched his heart as he searched mine,
And found the same old spirit there,
The same old cheer and seemed to see
Behind the mask of years and care
"The boy that used to sit with me."

SOME REAL FIDDLIN'.

I 'VE knowed a lot o' fellers who could fiddle mighty
prime,

An' seemed t' me it allus sort o' settled in my toe
An' sent me "down the centre" in a record breakin'
time

To balance on the corners with a girl I used t' know;
I 've loved it—Oh, I 've loved it!—every soul endurin'
chord

Comes ringin' down through mem'ry till I think
they 're playin' yet;
But my idees are changin' since the other night I
heard

A feller named MacMillan when he played a minuet!

The men I 've knowed that fiddled have been mostly
"free-for-all"

As sayin' is, an' partial to the "Ol' Gray Eagle"
brands

Of fiddle music mostly—that 's the kind I 've liked t'
call

The "good ol' fashioned music that a pore man
understands";

I reckon that I 've loved it 'cause it 's all I ever knew,
An' tooth an' nail I 've fought for it an' bragged of
it, an' yet

Some Real Fiddlin'

The other night I weakened an' I plum surrendered to
That feller named MacMillan when he played that
minuet!

I've looked for words to rhyme it but, I swan, there's
nary one

That's good enough or nowheres near entrancin'-
like an' sof'—

There wa'n't no way of tellin' where the melody begun
No more than what there was a way to tell where
it left off!

It sort o' started somewhere like as if a master hand
Was reachin' down from somewhere like in fairy
tales it does,

An' bowin' that 'ere fiddle for that man MacMillan
and

A thousand times more sweeter than "Gray Eagle"
ever was!

The music first reminded me of somethin' like a
storm—

Of like enough an Aprul storm of snow an' rain an'
hail,

An' then he coaxed her down a bit until the sun shone
warm

An' all the world was glad again an' chasin' of its tail!
It raily held me spellbound, sort o' mesmerized, for
shore,

'Cause when that man MacMillan finished up his
minuet

I was holdin' hands with some one that I never saw
before!—

I would n't be a bit surprised if she was laffin' yet!

CALLIN' THE ROLL.

DOZIN' by the kitchen fire an' dreamin' dreams
agin,
A-bringin' back the happy days with school-day pleasures in,
Bringin' back the winter times—how dreams contrive
to fool!—
An' rosy young 'uns leggin' off to'rds Gage's Districk
School;
Back they come a-trompin' through my Fancy's magic
spell—
I seem to see 'em gathered there, an' hear the mornin'
bell
Tinklin' in the frosty room, an' then, upon my soul,
Through all the years that 's vanished Addie Rhine-
hart calls the roll!

“Angeliny Appinger” — “Tom Allen” — “Herbert
Ames” —

How Memory jist fairly glows at them familiar
names!

“Abner Berks” — “Elisha Bond” — “Bud Berks” —
an' loud and clear

Through the chambers of my memory each young 'un
answers “Here!”

"Ann Serepty Burlingame"—an' silence casts its spell,

Each young 'un looks with downcast eyes; ah, I remember well

Her saddened face, her vacant seat, our teacher's tears, an' then

She whispered that we 'd never see our little friend again.

"Martin Crouch"—was next in line, ol' fat an' freckled Mart—

Lord had t' make him extry big t' hold his bulgin' heart!

"Lem'l Dawson"—"Hiram Driggs"—an' Hiram's brother, "Bunt,"

Was stalwarts that was allus there—an' usually in front;

"Bessie Sykes" an' "Mairy Berks" an' lispin' "Tildy Feth,"

Who pulled her braids endurin' roll an' allus answered "Yeth!"

Through my dreams they answered "Here"—well, not adzackly all,

For some of them are answerin' the Heavenly Teacher's call.

Down through all the alphabet an' finally to "S"—
Now there 's where all my hopes an' fears an' longin's was I guess—

There the name was written that, with flourishes an' crooks,

I 'd copied on the margins of my ragged copy books!
Teacher spoke the name again!

I wakened with a start,
I felt the same ol' bashfulness an' tuggin' at my heart,
An', maybe it was fancy, but around behind my cheer
I saw your mother standin' an' I thought she answered, "Here!"

A DAMPER ON DISCIPLINE.

“WHERE 'S that child?” I said, an' went
An' cut a long beech gad, an' trum
Branches off, an' really meant
T' tan his jacket when he come—
Tan it right!—an' learn him not
T' gallivant through all outdoors,
Specially when he knows he's got
T' get the cows an' do the chores.

“Where 's that boy?” I says, an' ast
The naybor's folks, a-thinkin' they
Might o' seen him goin' past,
An' hailed him when he run away;
Nary hide ner hair they'd seen
No more 'n me!—an' law, I stretched
Fingers 'round that limber green
Beech gad o' mine untwell they etched!

“Where 's that child?” I ast, an' got
A leetle trimbly, I expeck,
Thinkin' mebbe like as not
He'd fell some'eres an' bruk his neck!
Hunted through the loft an' out
Behind the barn an' down the run,
Places young 'uns think about
An' head for when they look for fun.

"Where 's my boy?" I whined, an' then
As if in answer there he come
Down the pastcher lane again
An' headin' straight for us an' home—
Steppin' high an' straight an' sta'nch
And proud as Grant, as like as not—
An' draggin' from a willer branch
The first horndays he ever caught!

"Where you been?" I says, an' looks
Right in his eyes an' there I saw
Pitchers of the fields an' brooks
An' things a young 'un loves! My law,
All my temper left my head,
I throwed that beech gad good an' strong!—
'Stead o' what I 'd planned, I said:
"Why don't y' take your pa along?"

THE EXILE AND THE CITY.

I 'M sick of your soft palaver,
I 'm sick of the way you fawn—
Of your subtle arts that deceive our hearts
'Til the best of our lives is gone,
I 'm sick of your rush and scramble,
Your devilish siren call—
I 'm sick of your noise and your shallow joys,
I 'm sick of it—sick of it all!

I 'm sick of your lights and glamor,
I 'm sick of your sin-paved ways—
I loath the sights of your wakeful nights,
The grind of your sordid days;
I 'm weary of trying and failing,
Of sowing for others to reap—
Of futures that fade and promises made
You never intended to keep!

I 'm sick of your place of shadows—
I long for a patch of sky,
A smell of fields that the valley yields
To the southwind hurrying by;
I long for the paths and freedom
That only the dreamer shares—
Then go to rest upon Nature's breast,
A mother who really cares!

CHRISTMAS CHEER AT HOME.

WAY above the noise an' clutter an' the jarrin'
sort o' rhyme
That pervades a tarnal city all endurin' Christmas
time,
There's a happy sort o' measure, jes' as simple as kin
be
That appeals t' simple fellers jist about the style o'
me.
It's the spirit of a Christmas comin', ringin', singin'
down—
Of a Christmas back in Swazy 'fore we up an' moved t'
town,
Where our appetite got "tony" an' demanded Frenchy
feed,
An' our bank account got busted *an' our conscience*
went to seed!
Of a Christmas 'mongst some people every bit as good
as them
Who was 'round the sainted manger on that day at
Bethlehem!
Can't y' hear 'em? Can't y' see 'em? Can't y' clasp
their hands agin?
Can't y' hear their happy greetin's as they come
a-flockin' in?

Christmas Cheer at Home

It was "Howdy, Cousin Rodney!"
It was "Howdy, Uncle John!"
How is aunt, an' all the childern,
An' the stock a-comin' on?
Well, I want to know! Here 's Lucy
An' the twins, an' Mary's Paul!
Here is company, mother—*company!*
Merry Christmas to y' all!"

There was Wigginses an' Platers an' the Hills an'
Bakers, too,
An' the Crumps was comin' later when the road was
broken through;
There was 'Lige an' Hiram Oldam—though they
was n't kith or kin
They was allus mighty welcome on account o' fiddlin'.
An' there 's Thomps an' Lester Morgan an' their
cousin come from town,
An' the Burton gals from Plunketts, an' the ol' war-
widder Brown
Who was allus present with us 'cause she had no place
t' stay,
An' she used t' stir our feelin's an' our pity Christmas
day!
There was others I 've forgotten, an' 't would stretch
my pencil some
To describe the Christmas baskets *nearly twict the size*
of 'em!
An' there 's nary rhyme, I swanny, that would make
y' understand
All the depth an' breadth of welcome when we grasped
'em by the hand.

It was "Howdy, Mister Granby—
 Don't y' ever mind the snow!"
 It was "Howdy, Cousin Lucy
 An' the twins—I want to know!
 Well, if here ain't Aunt Serepty!
 Put your wraps in yender hall—
 Ma, y' better turn the damper—
 Merry Christmas to y' all!"

You kin build your city buildin's an' kin build 'em
 broad an' high—
 You kin pass your *ordinances* shuttin' out the very
 sky—
 You kin hedge me in with trollies an' with walls of
 brick an' sich,
 An' kin consecrate my efforts to the pockets of the
 rich;
 But y' can't p'vent me dozin' in my squeakin' swivel
 cheer
 An' a-dreamin' of a Christmas in a better place than
 here!
 All your citified contraptions an' their rumble an'
 their roar
 Ain't enuff t' drown the greetin's of the naybors at the
 door,
 For above the noise an' clutter an' the traffic an' the
 din
 I kin hear their sleighbells jingle an' kin hear 'em wel-
 comed in.

It was "Howdy, Mister Johnson!"
 An' 't was "Howdy, same t' you!"

An' "The other folks is comin'
When the road gits broken through"—
"Better stir the fire, mother,
For they 're purty cold, y' see—
Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!"
To them all—exceptin'—me!

FALLTIME IN SWAZY.

THERE 'S a touch of Fall in the air—a feelin' all
over the town
That 's told by the trees and the sharpenin' breeze, an'
the swirl of the leaves comin' down;
It 's sensed in the oaks' an' the maples' disguise,
The flap of the 'bus-driver's hat in his eyes,
The crack of his whip an' the style of his song,
An' swing of his arms as he rattles along;
The storekeeper's dog has forsaken his mat,
An' sought out the sun with the shoemaker's cat,
An' there 's nobody else in sight exceptin' old Jerry
McClune
Meanderin' by,
Unusually spry,
A-trillin' the air of an old army tune.

There's a touch of Fall in the air; why, even the noise
of the mill
Sounds turrible near, the air is so clear, an' things are
so solemn an' still;
The jolt of a wagon or trace hangin' down,
A body can hear 'em all over the town—
The ring of the anvil an' tinsmith's tattoo
Make twice as much noise as they commonly do!

An' down in the Square by the Courthouse t'day
The sunshine behaved in a scandalous way;
It smiled an' it frowned an' it cried, 'til I reckined Miss
Summer was mad,
An' tossin' her head
Of gold and of red,
As if she was drunk with the fun she has had!

There's a touch of Fall in the air; I noticed it special
to-night,
The porch shadders fell and lingered a spell, then
melted away out o' sight
Along with the sun that laid down in the West,
As if it was tired an' needful fer rest.
The hired man skirmished until he had found
Some logs for the grate an' we gathered around—
The hull fambly of us!—an' pa, he-says-he
“A panful o' pippins, now, won't offend *me!*”
An' mother, she drawed the shades an' carefully shut
the stair
That led t' the loft,
An' says, sort o' soft:
“I vum, there 's a feelin' o' Fall in the air.”

THE OLD ROSE DRESS.

BENEATH the eaves where the fragrant bloom
Sweeps back and forth like the player's bow
Across the strings, and the attic room
Is filled with a cadence, soft and low,
Away in the corner, where none may know,
A chest is hidden—grown old so soon!—
And there, with the treasures of Long Ago,
The old rose dress of another June.

Her first long dress! for the bride was young,
Her heart was light and her face was fair
The day she buried the gown among
Her cherished things, and she left it there.
Now Time has whitened her raven hair,
And life sings low in a plaintive tune,
Except when she steals up the attic stair,
To the old rose dress of another June.

Her own have come, and her own have gone,
And all have stood 'neath the marriage bell,
Where guests were gathered to bid them on
Their rosied way and to wish them well;
The guests have gone and the silent spell
Has come, that follows the bridal noon,
And found her there, where the teardrops fell
On the old rose dress of another June.

No man may know of the woman's part
In life's whole test, nor the tears it brings,
Nor understand how her woman's heart
Is all enwrapped by the little things—
A little worn shoe with its tasselled strings,
A broken slate or a pewter spoon—
And, oh, the wealth of joy that clings
To the old rose gown of another June!

FREDERIC REMINGTON.

(An appreciation overheard in Laramie, Wyo., in 1903, and pertinent now that the great portrayer of horses and wild life has passed away.)

“**I** KNOWED the man,” the uncouth ranger said,
And “cinched” his horse the while his mem’ry fed
On other days before the West’s retreat;
“I knowed the man—he wa’n’t like tenderfeet
Are apt to be, but seemed to me he knowed
Our country here, as well as *us*, an’ showed
A likin’, too. But barrin’ that, of course
I liked him most because he loved a horse.

“I packed him once from here t’ Sixty Mile,
To Woods’s Forks—ol’ waterhole—the while
He dabbed around with brushes made o’ hair
T’ paint a fight that never happened there
As far ’s I know, ’twixt cavalry an’ Snakes,
'*Bout one t’ ten*—with waterhole the stakes!
An’ lookin’ on it struck me purty well
That cavalry was plum *invitin’ hell!*

“He pitched men all doubled up—an’ dead—
With rifles jammed, an’ life blood runnin’ red
Around the sand! ’T was awful, but I swear
It seemed t’ me he never turned a hair

Through all of it, until he come t' draw
A wounded horse, an' lookin' on I saw
His eyes fill up! 'T was foolishness of course,
An' yit it showed how much he loved a horse!"

And now he 's dead! The last paint tube is dried!
He 's passed the crest, and down the Other Side
In Indian file with trapper and with scout
And long-passed types he sketched and wrote about.
Posterity will pass the old-time trail
For time to come, and may it never fail
To heed the lines—the simple lines that tell
"A man lies here who loved God's creatures well."

'LIGE HAWKINS FIDDLIN' UP YENDER.

'LIGE HAWKINS' place is yender on that little rise
o' ground—

The house with all the flowers an' the trumpet vines
around—

Whilst I adjoin to Hawkins on that crooked fence y'
see

A-kitterin' way off yenderwards; 'twixt Hawkins'
farm an' me

Is more 'n a mile I reckon, but when dusk begins to go,
An' 'Lijah takes his fiddle down an' tromps her dancing
bow,

The distance seems t' shorten 'til if you should judge
by ear

You'd swear it wa'n't ten paces, an' that 'Lige was
playin' *here!*

It's same ol' ringin', singin', trompin', rompin' inster-
ment

He used t' tote wherever the Potomac Army went,
Fer 'Lijah was a "Bucktail" in the Army—so was I—
An' someway 'Lijah's fiddle seems a comrade mighty
nigh!

There's times the night is quiet when I like to have
him git

His fiddle down an' string it an' go traipsin' over it,

64 'Lige Hawkins Fiddlin' Up Yender

An' hear him play the pieces that he used t' play, be-
cause

They sort o' set me thinkin' of the time the Army was!

There 's sumthin' in his fiddlin' an' the starlight over-
head

That takes me back to yender, an' the campfires
flicker red

Through 'Lijah's apple orchard, an' I see the Georgia
boys

We fit in Spottsylvania, an' I hear the battle noise—
Then softly draps the music like a dadburned fiddle
can,

An' I hear the pickets banterin' across the Rapidan—
I hear my comrades singin' an' their laughin', like as
not,

An' Mem'ry brings the faces that I 'd mighty nigh
fergot!

Then suddenlike I 'm rousin' to the crickets' chirr and
cheep,

An' 'Lige has quit his fiddlin' an' I know *I've been t'*
sleep!

Then jist as sure as taxes ma begins t' rant an' scold:
*"Come in the house this minnit or you 'll ketch yer death
o' cold!"*

THE STREET THAT LEADS TO HOME.

IN Home Again Street,
Where the arching maples meet
O'er a way resounding with the children's laughter
sweet;
Where a host of girls and boys,
And a bedlam of noise,
Fill the street with pleasure and companionship and
joys;
Happy is the man who finds it—
Sweeter still, the tie that binds it
If he hears a welcome sweet
In the pattering little feet!

In Home Again Street,
Where the golden days retreat
Softly, midst the shadows where the kindly maples
meet;
Peopled by its boys and girls—
Flash of gingham, glint of curls,
Laughter sweet as water tumbling o'er a bed of pearls!
Skies smile sweeter up above it—
Even twilight seems to love it,
So reluctantly it dies
When it's time for lullabyes.

66 **The Street That Leads to Home**

In Home Again Street!

Where the sweetest fancies meet,

Growing real and happy 'neath the spell of welcome
sweet;

Gone the cares and everything!

Here a man becomes a king,

Happy with the greetings that his little subjects
bring;

Favored is the man who finds it!—

Sweeter still, the tie that binds it

If the pattering feet that come

Lead him to the throne of home!

A FACE IN A CROWD.

'T WAS only a glimpse of a tired face
As the hurrying crowd went by—
A woman caught in the gold-mad race
That comes and goes in the market-place
Where bartering traders ply—
A face betraying the tear-drop's stain
And saddened by tears unwept,
With bloodless lips that bespoke the pain
Of promises never kept.

The brow was white as a marble brow,
With lustreless eyes, and hair
That seemed entwined with the thorny bough
That Fate, in its mystery, seems to vow
The patient and weak must wear;
The cheek was sunken and deathly gray—
Once fair as the fairest one—
And seemed to long in a maiden's way
For a kiss of the April sun.

'T was only a glimpse of a tired face
As the hurrying crowd went by—
A face bereft of its charm and grace
And set to drift in the market-place,
Where bartering traders ply;
Yet Hope, Desire, and Faith were there—
Not even the sad disguise
Could hide the trust and the whispered prayer,
And the far-away look in her eyes!

THE PRICE.

THE days we knew nothing and yet knew so much!
When slow-going Time moved along on a crutch
And did n't fly past as it flies past us now,
Nor pause by our side to put frost on our brow.

The days of our faith when the flowers had souls,
The moon was of cheese and the stars were but holes,
The rim of the world was just over the wood,
And fairies brought rabbits to boys who were good.

When lightning-bugs all carried wicks in their tails,
And hairs turned to snakes in the cattle barn pails;
When uncles were better than fathers by far,
And aunts always lived by a brown cookie jar.

The days of our faith when we *knew* what we knew
And all things were true—well, because they were true!
The days we knew nothing and yet knew so much—
Ah, would n't we trade our To-morrows for such?

The days of our faith! They have gone from us now,
So quickly and quiet we scarcely know how!
We 've reached our estate though a price it has cost,
And part of the price is the faith we have lost.

A DESERTED CABIN.

WHEREVER you may be, my lad, wherever you
may be,
Who played around this cabin home and loved it tenderly—
Wherever you have wandered now, my fancy seems
to say
You 're weary of your aimless quest and think of home
to-day.

The sighing breezes plead with me to go and seek you
out,
And tell you how the trumpet vines are rioting about,
Of how the buds are blossoming and drifting o'er the
thatch,
And tendrils twine a friendly hold around the drooping
latch.

The place is old and crumbling, lad, and going bit by
bit,
And shattered is the lofty oak that used to shelter it;
The mountain moss, so timid once, has ventured to
the door
And climbed the stone and sagging sill and crossed
the puncheon floor.

A Deserted Cabin

The crickets sing around the hearth where once the
 ruddy glare
Was heightened by the brighter glow of happy faces
 there;
And bees, nigh drunk with stolen sweets, go humming
 in and out
Where once the oaken rafters rang with children's
 merry shout.

And yet, despite its doddering age the sentiment re-
 mains—
To-day I paused beside the door and heard the sweet
 refrains
Of simple songs, the children's glee, and something
 seemed to say
A kindly word of you, my lad—of you who went
 away.

Though we are strangers, each to each, and ever apt
 to be,
For many miles may lie between, the mountains or
 the sea—
Wherever you may be, my lad, however lonely, too,
'T will cheer you, lad, to know to-day the cabin
 breathed of you.

SPRING IN THE COUNTRY AND TOWN.

‘**T**WIXT the narrow city alley and the smiling
country lane,
There ’s the difference of beauty and of Nature’s sweet
refrain—
There ’s the difference of blossoms and the pungent
smell of earth,
And of orchard green and laughter and of hearts at-
tuned to mirth;
In the one there ’s din of traffic, in the other fancies
sing—
That ’s the difference ’twixt the alley and the country
lane in spring.

Yet above the narrow alley, on a dingy window ledge,
Blooms a flower just as pretty as beside a country
hedge—
Comes a splash of sun as golden and a glimpse of
spring as fair
As the poets find worth rhyming in the country any-
where;
Throwing kisses from her fingers, with a merry, mad
refrain,
Spring goes singing through the alley just the same as
through the lane!

THE ONLY FRIENDS.

I N spring when things are dreamy-like an' summer
when they 're bright,
'Most everything 's a friend of mine that does n't sting
or bite;
A hollyhock or medderlark or jist an' ellow tree,
Or anything that grows or blooms kin be a friend t'
me;
But law—law—law—
When the wind 's a-blowin' raw
An' the chill of February seems t' somehow gee an'
haw,
Then I 'm mighty free t' tell y' that a pine or maple
knot
A-blazin' in the fire is the only friend I got!

I swan, there 's nothin' like it on a chisley winter's
night,
With sparks a-shootin' upwards from the flames
a-blazin' bright—
The shadders dancin' crossways of the rafters an' the
floor,
An' reachin' up the table legs or climbin' up the door—
An' law—law—law—
But the wind blows cold an' raw,
I declare each February is the worst I ever saw!—

Jist the worst that I remember!—an' a pine or maple
knot

A-blazin' in the fire is the only friend I got!

An' whilst I set an' ponder-like an' watch the shadders
flit

I feel ol' age a-creepin' an' the flames they whisper it—

They say I 'm growin' frosty like the February day,

An' in the flames are faces of the friends that 's gone
away—

An' law—law—law—

Don't the wind blow chill an' raw!

O, it allus makes my feelin's seem t' somehow gee an'
haw

When I look upon the faces in the blazin' of the knot,

Them dead, forgotten faces of the only friends I got!

THE TWO BARRIERS.

JUST an ol' time "hee-cup" tune on some one's
violin—

Somethin' as the sayin' is, that 's "got the devil in,"
That 's the kind o' tune I heerd the other day in town—
If it had n't been I had my feelin's battened down,
Lordy, I 'd o' cut 'er loose an' danced 'er, drat my
pelts!—

Danced 'er with my shadder if there was n't nothin'
else!

Danced it like I used t' dance it with Elviry Hicks,
'Fore I got religion—an' the roomatics.

Might o' been "Gray Eagle" an' it might o' been
"Zip Coon"—

I ain't much on music, could n't carry on a tune,
Line a hymn ner nothin' like a lot o' people kin—
I kin only feel it, an' the deviltry that 's in
Every note an' measure that the fiddler kin saw
Allus starts me goin', as the sayin' is, an' law
How I hankered yesterday t' try ol' dancin' tricks,
'Fore I got religion—an' the roomatics.

Good ol' fashioned music from a fiddle's friendly
strings,

Raspin' on my mem'ries of old harvest days an'
things—

Squawkin' out reminders of the harvest days when we
Balanced on the corners an' we swung eternally!
Conjur'n' up old faces of the folks that I 'd fergot
Twenty years ago or more!—of me, as like as not,
Dancin' down the centre set with Miss Elviry Hicks,
'Fore I got religion—an' the roomatics.

That 's the kind o' music I heerd yesterday in town!
Seemed as if my heart went up an' scruples they went
down

Thirty-five below, or more, an' law I ached t' sling
Off my Baptist yoke again an' have another fling!
Then my conscience poked me up an' sort o' says—
says he:

“Eb, that would n't coincide with churchly dignity!”
So I cooled my heels because I 've given up them
tricks,

Since I got religion—an' the roomatics!

THE MAN WHO USED TO KNOW YOU WHEN
YOU DID N'T HAVE A CENT.

I 'VE been to Philadelfy seein' Henry Abner Brown,
Who used to live in Swazy 'fore he up an' moved
to town

An' sold his latest patent that, aside from lawyers'
fees,

Brung half a million dollars an' perpetual royal-
ties!

I 'd pitched Henry spryer than he used to be, but no,
He 's twenty-five years older than he was a year ago!
His jowl 's a leetle fuller an' he 's dimmer in the eye
Than when we used to know him 'fore his hat was
built so high.

"It ain't the wealth," he whispered sort o' sorrowful
to me,

"Nor yet a poor digestion, Bill; but how 'd *you* like,"
says he,

"To hear some feller tellin' folks most every place y'
went

Of how he used to know y' when y' did n't have a
cent?"

He met me at the depo an' he hollered "Howdy-do!"
An' "Where 's that plug terbacker that you allus used
to chew?"

The Man Who Used to Know You 77

An' "Could y' spare a chew of it?" an' then he took
my hand

An' led me to the inn'ards of his palace rich an'
grand.

'T was filled with lots o' pitchers by a feller name o'
Payne

(An' Henry's wife had hid 'em on the *Louie Mezzy-
naine*,

But gosh, I could n't blame her!) an' the furniture—
my law!—

I 'low it was the richest that a body ever saw!

"I know it 's mighty purty," Henry says, "but Bill,"
says he,

"I never pull my latch string that I don't expect t' see
Some feller gazin' on 'em with a buzzard-like content,
An' tellin' how he knowed me when I did n't have a
cent!"

"It 's pleasin'," Hank confided, "when you do what
I have done—

An' hear the people's plaudits an' you know at last
you 've won!

It 's mighty satisfyin' when you hear 'em shout your
name,

An' mighty easy ridin' in the Chariot of Fame;

You sort o' git to reelin' with the aim that you have
kep',

As if you 'd been a-drinkin' an' was kind o' out o' step!

Unless you 're more than human then you 'll take to
swellin' just

The same as pouter pigeons 'til it seems you 're goin'
to bust,

78 **The Man Who Used to Know You**

An' then regret you did n't for you're apt to change your
tune

An' just collapse together, like a county fair balloon,
When things are at their zenith, 'cause you 're apt to
hear a gent

A-tellin' how he knew y' when y' did n't have a cent!"

.

An' back from Philadelphia I 've been thinkin' quite a
lot

On whether I would like to be a millionaire or not,
With lots of ottermobiles an' a private car beside,
An' lots o' costly pitchers that a body has t' hide!

I 've just about concluded that I 'd ruther stay at hum
With Myry an' our kith an' kin, an' all the rest of 'em,
Unless, along with wealth, I 'd find a way to circum-
vent

The men who used to know me when I did n't have a
cent!

POST-MEETIN' NIGHT.

NOT all the summers yit to come,
Nor all the sun or Aprile rain,
Kin lighten years so burdensome
An' bring a young heart back again:
For age is age, an' gray is gray,
I reckon that 's ordained for man,
Yit gran'pa seems to 've found a way
T' circumvent the mortul plan.
I swan, it seems his youth comes back
An' law, he steps as spry an' light
As thistledown, when gram'ma she
Puts on his woollen scarf, an' he
Goes off t' town Post-meetin' Night!

They meet in ol' Grand Army Hall,
An' as for formal business, jest
Dispense with that—don't even call
The roll, for reasons they know best!
They set around ol' box wood-stove
An' puff their pipes, like soldiers kin,
Until the smoke curls up above
An' weaves their battle fancies in;
They see ol' Pickett charge once more,

Post-Meetin' Night

Or Mosby dash or Forrest fight,—
Or Pope vamoose, or Jackson fall—
They see an' recollect it all
Around the stove Post-meetin' Night.

There 's Tophet of the Bucktail Boys—
An' lawsey, how that reg'ment fit!
An' Marsden of the 8th Illinois—
Confiderates respect 'em yit!
There 's Vet an' Hi an' Abner Schides,
An' Captain Fornes an' Herman Kloph—
Brung home more bullets in their hides
Than lots o' fellers fired off!
They 're all that 's left, yit they explain
Attendance bein' ruther light
By sayin' this or that one 's gone
Or "there 's so much a-goin' on
T' interfere, Post-meetin' Night."

Not all the summers yit t' come
Kin cheer 'em like these meetin's does,
For things have growed so burdensome
Since Sixties when the army was;
There 's nothin' else that sort o' stays
Their speerits like these meetin's do;
An' though a grateful nation pays,
Or pensions 'em—an' willin' to—
The biggest pension check they draw
Is when they gather there an' fight
Ol' battles o'er, an' gas an' talk
An' make ol' Lee an' Jackson walk
The chalk again, Post-meetin' Night.

OL' TIN-PEDDLIN' MAN. ·

BOUNDIN' which-an'-tother side along the County
Road,

Pots an' pans a-rattlin' on his combynation load—
Travellin' in a cloud o' dust like a circus does—
Smilin' face was redder than his peddlin' wagon was;
Ol' fermiliar feller—an' we used t' like him, too—
Knowed him by his first name all the county through,
Most like County Sheriff, an' I guess, if truth was
knowed,

He was *twict* as pop'lar all along the County Road!

“Barter fer wash-wool,
Spareribs or sides—
Gingshang an' peppers,
Chickens an' hides;
Trade y' some drygoods,
Kittles or pans—”
That was the cry of
Tin-peddlin' man's!

Ever'thing for barter that a body ever saw!
Stewin' pan for mother an' a Barlow knife for pa,
Ribbons for Serepty an' a breastpin made o' pearl—
Somethin' for the hired man an' for the orphan girl;
Ever'one got somethin' an' it left a balance, too,
Which we took in candy *like the childern allus do!*

Ol' Tin-Peddlin' Man

Then he 'd up an' leave us—on along the County
Road—

Faint an' fainter sounded, 'bove the rattle of his load,

“Barter fer wash-wool,

Sparerib or sides—

Gingshang an' peppers,

Chickens an' hides;

Trade y' some drygoods,

Kittles or pans—”

Faint come the song of

Tin-peddlin' man's.

County Road is diffurnt now, it 's changed a mortul
heap—

Folks I knowed have flitted an' the past has gone to
sleep;

Folks are livin' scrumptouser, in houses mighty fine—

Houses they got marrit in, they 've moved 'em out
behin'!

Ol' tin-peddlin' wagon never comes around to-day—

Tourin' keers—*oddrot 'em*—seem t' have the right o'
way!

Yit, when I 'm a-musin' in my friendly easy cheer,

Back of all their splutter an' their buzzin' I kin hear:

“Barter fer wash-wool,

Sparerib or sides—

Gingshang an' peppers,

Chickens an' hides;

Trade y' some drygoods

Kittles or pans—”

Back comes the song of

Tin-peddlin' man's!

THE PERFECT HOME.

WITHIN this home there is not room for care—
No darkened corners where it thrives the best;
Some other home may better suit care's quest
But here, alas, is sunshine everywhere!

There is no path by which the spectre, gloom,
May reach the hearth and spread its sombre frown,
Since, coming here, it must needs follow down
The garden path and lose itself in bloom.

There is no welcome here, day come and gone,
For woe and tears their wretched tales to pour—
They pass it by since close beside the door,
The blossoms sway and gayly wave them on.

There is no place for sorrowing age among
The chimney seats, for childhood ruleth here;
The smiles of youth, the childsongs loud and clear,
And silvery laughter make the old heart young.

There is not room for woe to seek its vent
As woe might seek within the homes of some—
Not room, indeed, for lo, this humble home
Is crowded now with love and sweet content.

TO THE HALFWAY HOUSE AGAIN.

“JINGLE bells, jingle bells—” ain’t it funny how
That song ’ll set me dreamin’ an’ reflectin’, even
now—

Sets me smokin’ harder, jist like worryin’ will do,
Untwell I scorch my whiskers an’ the livin’ room gits
blue!

Smoke weaves in an’ out’ards into pitchers fine an’
quaint,

An’ purtier, I reckon, than a artist chap could paint—
Giner’lly of bobsleds with some gals an’ fellers in
A-slippin’ down the turnpike to the Halfway House
agin!

Winter in the city? Well, I reckon it’s the same
As winter in the country, in its temper’ture an’
name—

Boys and gals a-sleighin’ on a clare an’ crispy night,
Why, I kin hear ’em singin’ past my winder as I write;
But there’s somethin’ missin’ in the way of fun an’
cheer

In sort o’ sleighin’ parties that the folks enjoys here—
Somethin’ sort o’ lackin’—makes me want to call ’em
in

An’ bid ’em all a-sleighin’ to the Halfway House agin!

To the Halfway House Again 85

Wa'n't no omnybusses with their patent runners!—
law,

'T was nothin' but a bobsled with the box filled up
with straw

Covered up with laprobes, jist as soft as down, it
seems,

An' snaked along the turnpike by the champeen
county teams!

Room fer everybody 'twell it crowded so, I jocks,
Some boy without a sweetheart had t' hold the fiddle
box—

Guess we 'd have t' dovetail or t' sort o' wedge 'em in
If we should go a-sleighin' to the Halfway House agin!

Phillips boys an' Murray Moore an' "Chick" an'
"Shorty," too,

An' Fuller an' the Merket boy, an' Ralph an' Ford an'
Lou

Heard, an' they was brothers, too, who since they 've
captured Fame

Kin write the whole durned alphabet behind their
shingle name!

As for girls who used t' go, well, really there is times
When beauty gits too beautiful t' sing in common
rhymes—

Jist defies the Muses!—like the gals we used t' know
An' use t' take a-sleighin' 'bout a dozen years ago.

"Jingle bells, jingle bells—" how that ol' refrain
Comes back an' gits t' tappin' on a feller's winder
pane,

86 **To the Halfway House Again**

Like it did this evenin', when 't was wafted clare an'
sweet

From sleighin' parties passin' in the dadburned city
street!

Ma laid down her sewin' an'—well, I laid down my
pen,

An' both of us set listenin' 'til it faded out, an' then

We set sort o' quiet whilst our fancies wallered in

A moonlight night an' sleighin' to the Halfway House
agin!

THE LITTLE THINGS.

THE little things—the kindly words and deeds
That one may say and do yet seldom does,
The word of cheer some toiling brother needs
That we withhold and never speak because
We did n't think! 'T would turn his day to gold,
Repaying us in cheer ten thousand fold!

The little things—a baby's tiny shoe,
The toys he dropped along the rosy ways,
A broken drum and leaden soldier too,
All take us back to long forgotten days;
The greatest things we pass and then forget,
The little things—ah, we remember yet!

The little things! How wrong and misapplied
When all that 's best in Life is made of such—
The cheering words of kindness that abide—
The song of love that springs from Mem'ry's touch;
The little things in all this throbbing strife
Are, after all, the greatest things in life!

THE LITTLE BOY FROM THE POOR FARM.

WE used to live on the Chick-a-ree,
My ma and pa and our dog an' me
An' brindle calf an' a banty hen,
'Til pa got ager an' died, an' then
My ma died, too, an' the sheruff up
An' held a vendoo an' sold my pup
An' brindle calf an' my hen an' things,
An' a man by the name o' Landrum brings
Me up t' the village—*an' he's trustee!*—
To where the Home fer the Friendless be!
An' last of Aprul er first o' May
I cum out here fer t' work by day
Fer Mister Gibbons, an' now that all
The harvest 's over an' gittin' Fall,
I 'm goin ' back t' the Poor Farm.

I 've gone t' school an' I 'm turnin' ten,
An' almost strong as the hired men;
I 've earned my keep in a lot o' ways
"That 's real surprisin'," Mis' Gibbons says;
I 've fed the pigs an' I 've run the churn,
An' brung the wood fer the stove t' burn,
An' druv the cows an' I 've gone t' town
An' brung the mail an' the groceries down,

The Little Boy from the Poor Farm 89

An' worked the garden an' watered stock,
An' helped with puttin' the corn in shock,
An' helped t' cradle an' bind an' reap,
An' worked purt' nigh 'til I fell t' sleep,
An' never complained ner faulted none—
But now that all o' the work is done
I 'm goin' back t' the Poor Farm.

I 've liked it fine an' I like the folks—
The hired man an' his funny jokes,
He plays jewsharp an' he calls me "Bub"
An' 'vites me out fer a game o' "scrub"
When evenin' comes, an' he lets me win!
I like my room with the fixin's in,
An' like the dog, 'cause I learned him how
T' snap fer meat when I hollered "Now!"
I like the nayborhood boys an' girls,
Espeshully her with the hangin' curls
That never points when I 'm goin' by
Ner hollers "You 're poor-farm boy!" an' I
Have allus wanted to show her how
T' make dolls' hats out o' buckeyes—*now*
I-gotta-go-back-t'-the-Poor-Farm!

THE END OF THE JOURNEY.

THESE, the shoes in which I walked the ways
O'er hills of love, through vales of sweet content,

By winding streams that murmured pleasant praise
And cheerfulness, whatever way I went;
Daisies brushed them, dewes of many a dawn
Have sprinkled them, along my early way;
Once—long ago—a maiden bound them on
And led me far in pleasant fields astray.

Soft grasses touched them 'long the path of Youth,
Sharp rocks have cut them on the stony trail,
Hot sands have burned them on the way to Truth,
The goal of which the stoutest heart must fail.
Far have they gone from field to pleasant lane,
To highway down to mart of trade and strife—
Hither and yon, across and back again,
By endless paths that make the journey, Life.

These, the shoes, all tattered now and torn,
Their soles worked thin by many a racking test,
Now cast aside as far too badly worn
For tired feet to start another quest;
Once I thought perhaps they still might be
Made whole again, though far beyond their prime,
Yet here they are, come back again to me,
Returned as worthless by the cobbler, Time!

THE EXILE FROM HOME.

THE valley 's red and gold to-day,
And torches sign to me
From hilltops where my fancies play
And where I long to be.

By imagery, my journey lies
Through country ways, and down
Forgotten paths in Autumn guise,
And stubble fields of brown.

Through silent woods my fancy strays—
Soft-carpeted with red
And fringed with gold the Autumn lays—
More splendid overhead!

Then out upon the travelled road,
To pause and hear afar
The creaking of the harvest load
Where tardy garnerers are.

To be alone for long, and gaze
Upon the village blest,
And watch it live these golden days
In Autumn peace and rest!

Each cherished spot, each boyhood track,
Each hill and flaming tree,
Is whispering to-day "Come back—
Come home again, with me."

THE SEPARATION.

AFTER I die will the order shift?—
The sorrow wane and the shadows lift?
Every morn will the sun come up
A golden ball in a silver cup,
And shed its light and its warmth to bless
And free your heart of its loneliness,
After I die?

After I die will there not be one
To share your burden as I have done?—
None of them all who will take your hand
To sympathize and to understand
As once I did—and to comfort you
And strengthen as once I was wont to do,
After I die?

After I die will there be no face,
No hand, no voice, to take my place?
None to live in your happy smiles,
And share your dreams of the afterwhiles?
Will sadness and sorrow go on and on
For you to meet and to bear alone,
After I die?

After I die! Why, the time may be
A year—an age—an eternity

The Separation

93

Ere we shall meet—it is written so!
And hard enough is the call to go,
But easier far if I only knew
That Life and all will be kind to you
After I die!

A JOB FOR DOC SIFERS.

(James Whitcomb Riley is seriously ill in his home in Indiana.—News note.)

THE *Banner* says Jim Riley 's sick!—
It says he 's had a stroke!

Donblame it all, as like as not that 's jist another joke
Jim 's figgered out, an' 'bout the time we sniffle—you
an' me—

He 'll set it off an' have the laff on us etarnally!
But after all perhaps it 's true, perhaps his hand lies
pale

On counterpane—all tired out—an' nevermore to
trail

His pen concernin' homely things, nor sing their
praise agin;

If that 's the case I want t' vote t' call Doc Sifers in!

Git out an' search the kentry roads for Doc—he 's
undersized—

'Bout five foot four—a sorrel horse—the man Jim
'mortalized

In poem once until we cried—a reg'lar Riley trick!—
An', when y' find him, head him off an' whisper "Jim
is sick!";

Perhaps he 'll be a-aidin' the afflicted an' the pore,
Or bringin' one more young'un where there ain't no
use for more—

Donblame these doctors!—but I 'low that when he
knows it's Jim

He 'll swim the roads t' reach him—that's about the
size o' *him*!

An' then Doc Sifers—here's our prayers—you do your
level best,

Try allypath an' homypath an' all the dadburned
rest

O' *paths*, until y' find the one that pulls Jim Riley
through,

An' brings the gratitude o' men t' you Doc Sifers—
you!

Jim says hisself your homespun skill can cure ever'-
thing,

Then give us back his smile t' cheer, his gentle voice
t' sing

Of famblies in old-time homes with hollyhocks about,
An' all the other homely things we jist can't do with-
out!

“WHEN THE BIG HAND POINTS UPSTAIRS.”

PLAY is such a happy pastime and the romp so full
of fun

That the longest day is ended ere it fairly seems
begun;

There 's the happy morning greeting, then the plans
for childish play,

And a little bit of laughter—lo, the morning 's sped
away!

There 's a little bit of porridge, then a little bit of nap,
Then the fearless explorations of a roving little chap;
There 's so many little worries and so many little cares,
That, before you really know it, why, the big hand
points upstairs!

Ho, the orchard lands are hilly and the fence so high
to climb!—

There 's so much a boy must conquer in so very short
a time!

There 's so many things to see to and so much he must
attend,

So many things to tinker, and so many things to
mend!—

He must lead the fearless army that surrounds the
pantry door

Where the loot is ginger cookies for the whole brigade
—*of four!*—



“ When the big hand points upstairs ”

"When Big Hand Points Upstairs" 97

And so many expeditions 'gainst the Indians and
bears,

That it is n't strange he's tired when the big hand
points upstairs!

Play your best, you little trudger; every grown-up,
ripe with years,

Shares your every little pleasure and your laughter
and your tears!—

Every bit of fun and frolic, every little childish whim
Brings a happy thought of childhood to the weary
heart of him.

When your play is all behind you, and your Boyhood's
gone away,

May He make your work as happy as He makes your
day of play—

May He sooth your griefs and troubles and relieve
your many cares,

And be close beside to lead you, When the Big Hand
Points Upstairs!

THE SUMMER EVENING.

THE long summer's evening in Home Again street,
The bubble of laughter and shuffle of feet—
Of little feet wearied with journeys to-day
Afar in the pastures of wonder and play;
The glint of a frock and the gold of a curl,
The shy, happy glance of a boy or a girl,
A tryst on the curb 'twixt a quaint little two
For all like the lovers in story books do.

The long summer's evening when little ones greet
The toil-wearied people in Home Again street,
And lighten their hearts with a smile and a press
Of Youth's pudgy hand and a childish caress;
The hearts that are heavy grow lighter again,
And sweeter grows Life than it ever has been—
Why even the teamster, perched high and alone,
Is urged along faster to home and his own.

The long summer evenings—the shadows unreal
That creep from the West to the tree-tops and steal
'Cross sidewalks and pavements and wander away
To warn little children an end to their play;
The hush and the gloom and the whispered "good-
nights"—
The promise of fun and to-morrow's delights,
And then like the end of a sweet, singing verse,
The lamplighter comes and the children disperse.

THE LONE GRAVE IN THE SHENANDOAH.

B EYOND the ridge the pike wends down
Where once the lines of battle met,
Through Berryville and Middletown
Where scars of warfare moulder yet—
Where empty sills stare out upon
The ragged columns passed and gone.

Past little hamlets, gray and old,
Where Early fought one fateful day,
Now set in summer's green and gold,
Where fair-haired children romp and play—
Where ivy bravely casts its shade
To hide the scars that hatred made.

At length it seems to pause before
A gray, old-fashioned home where May
Spreads roses 'round the open door,
And, when she 's in a mood to play,
She scatters petals on a grave
Beneath the trees where grasses wave.

"A soldier's grave," the house-wife sighs—
An aged woman, bent and gray,
Who once beheld with those same eyes
Invading armies pass her way,

100 **Lone Grave in the Shenandoah**

And bore within her woman's heart
The hate that was a woman's part.

"A soldier, sir—the Nineteenth Corps—
They'd fallen back when Early came;
He straggled here before our door
Too weak and ill to give his name—
Too sick to follow with his own,
And here he died—with us—alone—"

To-day does some one sigh and weep—
In all the world is one who'd care
To stoop above him in his sleep
And place a bud or blossom there?
Does some one long to place a rose
Upon her soldier's grave? Who knows?

And knowing not, so May assumes
The kindly task, and bends her knee
To scatter Springtime's fairest blooms
With lavish hand, and seemingly
They blossom sweeter o'er the head
Of some one's unknown, sainted dead!

SOMETIME.

SOMETIME we will go, we say,
Where the old true friends await,
Hopeful that some happy day
They may greet us at the gate;
Future whispers soft and low:
"Sometime—sometime—we shall go!"

Sometime we will speak, we say,
Little words we left unsaid
That might brighten some one's way—
Some one's way that 's dark instead,
Some kind word to help the weak
Sometime—sometime—we shall speak.

Sometime we will do, we say,
Something we have left undone—
Small, obscure in its way,
Save to some poor toiling one;
This we promise, fair and true,
Sometime—sometime—we shall do.

Sometime we will wake and know
Opportunity has fled,
Gone the friends of long ago—
Needless are the words unsaid,
For, as Time computes her sums,
Sometimes Sometime never comes!

DEFYIN' AFFLICTION.

'BIDE APPLEBEE of Swazy—law,
The blamedest man I ever saw!
In spite of his afflictions he
Is happy-like as he kin be!
He's got the roomaticks, an' is
So cross-eyed in his eyesight, sort o',
That once he paid *two* mortgages
Instead o' *one*, like what he 'd ort o'!

"It's in the knack," he 'd allus 'low,
"Of bein' happy, anyhow,
In spite o' trubbles, small or great,
The Lord sees fit t' visitate;
Me 'bein' cross-eyed, as I be,
I overlook a heap o' trouble,
But cheerfulness," he says—says he,
"Why natcherly I see it *double*."

A HOPELESS DEBTOR.

THREE creditors I have—one fair,
And one with locks of nut-brown hair,
And one—God bless his little poll!—
Who cannot boast of hair at all!
Three creditors with artful schemes,
Who walk with me and haunt my dreams—
Forever do they cross my sight
And dun me morning, noon, and night.

The one I owe for loving ways
That cheer her daddy's lonely days,
And one for merry laughs that spill
And make the bright days brighter still;
And one, the little bug-eyed tad,
Because he chose me for his dad—
Because he seeks my arms, I guess,
And trusts me in his helplessness.

I owe them all, for love and play,
A greater sum than I can pay;
Though life were twice the span it is,
And all my acts were kindnesses
To them, I 'd be their debtor yet—
Man cannot owe more hopeless debt,
Save that he owes to Him above,
Than when he owes a debt to Love!

HOMESICK.

WHEN wanderlust gets in your blood and leads
you far away
Among a people strange, perhaps—perhaps across
the sea;
When all the novelty wears off and sights become
passé,
And you're about as homesick as a mortal man can
be;
When you would walk or swim or fly, or anything you
could,
To get back home, or willingly give all you have to
give,
Now, honest, don't it cheer you up and set you feeling
good,
To meet a man who knows a man who comes from
where you live?

You talk about the smallest thing that marks the
absentee—
His beard, his gait, his speech, his ways, that mole
upon his nose,
For precious hours you discuss each eccentricity
That marks the man, and criticise his special cut of
clothes;

You split a many a quart of wine until your purse is
slim,

And resolutions you have made are tattered as a
sieve;

But what 's the odds if wine does flow, there 's naught
too good for him,

For he 's a man who knows a man who comes from
where you live.

He may not be the sort of man you 'd cotton to at
home!

He may affect atrocious clothes and not be worth
his salt,

He may not have a lofty thought beneath his wretched
dome,

But who are you that you should note each trifling
little fault?

Ah, well you know you would not care how many
faults might show—

Deficiencies that he may have you willingly for-
give!—

Nostalgia will level all, and all you care to know

Is he 's a man who knows a man who comes from
where you live!

TO A CHILD.

SOMETIME, child, when you are turning gray,
As I am now, and little children play
Around *your* chair as you are playing here,
You 'll understand and then forgive the tear
That fell just now upon your chubby hand;
Sometime, child—well, you will understand!

Sometime, child, when you are older grown,
You 'll understand why father mused alone
In twilight hours, while you were at your play—
Why, jealously, he watched each truant ray
Of sun that came and searched your nursery place
To kiss your curls and glorify your face.

Sometime, child, when little children bless
Your golden days, my wanton selfishness
Will then be plain, and then, child, you will know
Why father used to importune you so
To leave *your* land of happy fairy lore
For *his* grim land, to romp with him once more.

Sometime, child! 'T is written so to be,
A child will be as you are now to me;
And Time will fly as ever Time has flown
Since Time began—and Time will claim its own!
You 'll reach in vain to take the baby's hand—
'T is only then that you will understand!

THE LITTLE OLD MAN WITH THE RAGGEDY DOLL.

AN odd little chap with his far-away eyes,
His old-fashioned ways, and his solemn replies
That ludicrous seemed to his elders, and more
Becoming to Age than to Boyhood of *four!*
How quaint he appeared as he ambled in play
Or trudged on the heels of the darkening day!
No wonder I paused in my hurry to call
Him Little Old Man with the Raggedy Doll.

At end of the day 't was our fortune to meet
Alone in the shadows of Home-Again Street,
And gravely salute in the manner of those
Who people the Story-Book Land, I suppose.
"O-ho!" I 'd exclaim "I 'm a *gi-unt*, I be,
And all little boys best skedaddle from *me!*
And who are you?" Then he 'd pipe up so small,
"I 'se 'ittle ol' man with the raggedy doll."

Now summer and autumn have withered away,
And winter has summoned the children from play,
But night after night, through the sleet and the rain,
I 've harked for his greeting—a rap on the pane—
And looked for his face and his little tow head,
All bathed in the light that the lamp overshed,
And happy have been in his welcoming call—
The Little Old Man with the Raggedy Doll.

108 **Little Old Man with a Raggedy Doll**

But yesterday eve as I breasted the sleet
And snow and the rain into Home-Again Street,
A hush was upon it—the sky overcast—
A little white hearse went a-glistening past—
The sky seemed to turn and the world stricken dumb,
And all of the phantoms of June seemed to come
To wonder with me why the angels must call
The Little Old Man with the Raggedy Doll!

THE CHURCH AT WEBBSES' CORNERS.

WHEN the organ peals an' thunders an' the high-price singers screech
On a tune called "*obligattar*" way beyond the angels' reach,
An' a holler-chested parson starts t' wrassle with a brand
Of a new an' strange religion that I never understand—
Of a new an' strange religion teachin' mortuls how they kin
Dodge His teachin's for convenience then ketch step with God agin—
Then I allus git t' noddin' an' t' sort o' dreamin'-like
Of the church at Webbses' Corners on the Jackson Valley pike.

Through the atmosphere of fashion an' perfumery an' show
Comes a soothin' dream, an' pitcher, of a church I used t' know,
Where they had n't ary steeple settin' straddle of the peak,
Where the parson preached on Sundays an' he farmed the rest the week,

110 The Church at Webbses' Corners

Where they wa'n't no colored winders where the sun
could filter through
Deckin' folks in "gold an' purple" *long before they'd*
orter do!
Nary choir, pew, ner organ there, ner ennything that 's
like,
In the church at Webbses' Corners on the Jackson
Valley pike.

When the parson eased his gallus an' lit into "Jesus
Wept!"—
Well they ain't no livin' record that a body ever *slept!*
Ner they ain't no livin' record of his gittin' through
'fore one—
"Savin' souls," he allus argyed, "is a hull day's job er
nun!"
Then the services would taper an' Miss Lindy Janes
would line,
Whilse Serepty 'd start 'em singing "There 's a Land
of Corn an' Wine"—
Seemed t' me the angels jined 'em an' that Heaven's
chimes would strike
In the church at Webbses' Corners on the Jackson
Valley pike!

Then we'd wander slowly home'ards through the
fields an' through the woods,
With the smilin' world around us preachin' sermons
jist as good 's
What a city preacher preaches, or could preach y'
if he tried

The Church at Webbbses' Corners III

Though he mebbe gits four thousan' an' his winter's
wood beside!

.

Here I have t' quit my musin' cause a man with rubber
shoes

Pokes a basket on a handle in around amongst the
pews—

. Nothin' like

That 'ere church at Webbbses' Corners on the Jackson
Valley pike!

WHEN MOTHER 'S AWAY.

WHEN mother 's away from the children and me,
Nefarious schemes we contrive for our fun;
The Oldest, the Youngest and Quarter-Past-Three
Let riot obtain as we seldom have done;
We ride a cock-horse way to Banbury cross—
The furniture meets irreparable loss,
And everything 's scattered awry and a-toss,
And conscience and candor compel me to say
Our house is the noisest under the sun
When mother 's away!

When mother 's away and our tea time is nigh
We gather at table in solemn estate,
The wee little three little children and I,
And never were diners more prim and sedate!
But *one* little girlie shuns crumpets and tea,
And *one* little girlie "ain't hungry, 'oo see,"
And oddly enough it is true of all *three*,
And even I, I am willing to say,
Just wearily drum on the rim of my plate
When mother 's away.

When mother 's away and their bed hour chimes,
They gather around and they ask me for all
The fables and stories and nursery rhymes
That fondest of fathers could ever recall!—



"When Mother's away"

The one of the Prince and his wonderful snail—
The sailor who rode on the back of a whale—
With only *one* ear on the trend of the tale,
The *other* ear open and listening that they
Can hear her dear step on the stair in the hall,
When mother's away!

UNDER THE EVENING LAMP.

“DADDY, where does the summertime go?”
“Go ask your ma!”

“What would we have if we did n’t have snow?”

“Go ask your ma!”

“How do they put all the pits into plums?”

“Santy Claus makes all the dollies and drums,
Don’t he, pa?” “Why ain’t our fingers all thumbs?”

“Go ask your ma!”

“Why is the pigs’ tails all twisty and curled?”

“Go ask your ma!”

“Why don’t we never fall off of the world?”

“Go ask your ma.”

“Don’t people never breathe nothin’ but air?”

“Where does the shadows go, up on the stair,
When there ain’t nothin’ nor nobody there?”

“Go ask your ma!”

“Who was the very first parunts of all?”

“Go ask your ma!”

“Did n’t *they* never have parunts at all?”

“Go ask your ma!”

“How did it happen that you come to stay
Here in our house with our ma every day?

Which of you started it anyway? Say?”

“Go ask your ma!”

TO LITTLE HALF-PAST FOUR.

TO-DAY 'S the first I ever knew
That poppies bloom in winter *too*,
Or ever cast their ruddy glow
Above the mantle of the snow.

And yet to-day a bloom as red
As ever raised its pretty head
And gazed into the summer sky,
Was raised to me as I passed by.

Its sturdy stem was white with snow,
And seemed to quite reflect the glow
Of rosy cheeks, and over that
It wore a pretty crimson hat.

"What ho!" I laughed with much surprise
And rubbed my old deceiving eyes,
"Do poppies bloom in winter, too?"
And then I saw the bloom was *you*!

The bloom was you, and quite as fair,
A-nodding in your snowbed there,
As any that the fairies bring
And tumble in the lap of spring!

IN GRANDPA'S EYES.

WHAT is it you see in your grandpa's eyes,
Little child,
When night-time comes and the sunshine dies,
You lead him there to the hearth's red glow
And beg for the tales of the Long Ago—
What is it, aside from your golden hair
And smiling face, that 's reflected there,
Little child?

Can'st see nothing back of your face so sweet,
Little child?
Can'st not see the swing of the soldiers' feet—
The long blue line and its crest of steel
That rises and falls as the columns wheel—
The tears and the woe and the sad good-byes?
Can'st not see it all in your grandpa's eyes,
Little child?

A mem'ry, too sad for your tender years,
Little child,
Is pictured there through your grandpa's tears;
The two long lines of the Blue and the Gray—
The fight, and the end of the blood-bought day—
The trenches deep with the soldiers lost—
Ah, grandpa knows what the victory cost,
Little child!

A fairer dream in his eyes, I see,
 Little child,
Denied to you, little Half-Past Three;
A dusty column of marching men
All tattered and bearded, but—home again!
And there, to greet him from war's alarms,
A babe—*your mother!*—in grandma's arms,
 Little child!

MA'S BOY.

HIS lovin' task is finished now! Fer nigh t' forty
year
He 's what y' might called *anchored* to this quarter
section here!
With nary thought o' leavin' home, ner wanderin'
very fur—
He could n't seem t' bear the thought of ever leavin'
her,
'Twell fun'rel was—an' burrit her—an' naybors'
wimmin come
T' place the chairs an' air the house an' tidy of it
some;
He pegged the latch an' shet the blinds an' faced the
settin' sun
An' wandered down Ol' County Road—his lovin' task
was done!

Fer forty years he's staid behind whilst all the others
went,
An', more 'n that, it allus seemed that he was plum
content
T' stay behind an' let 'em go; "Blamedon," he used
t' say,
"There 's some one got t' stay with ma until she goes
away!"

An' here he staid an' worked fer her, an' kumpny fer
her, too—

Like me an' you an' others of us prob'ly would n't do!—
An' tromped a hundred miles I s'pose—er mebbe
more—t' git

Arbutuses er mandrake bloom t' cheer her up a bit.

An' more 'n half our county gals hev set their caps fer
him,

But law-my-law, they give it up on seein' jist how slim
Their chances was, an' heerd him say he "guessed he
would n't do

No marryin' whilst mother lives"—*an' liked him fer
it, too!*

An' did n't do no marryin'—ner even court—because
He allus seemed t' 'preciate jist what his duty was;
He cared fer her as faithfully an' tenderly, yes s-i-r,
As what she cared for him when he was helpless
than her!

His lovin' task is finished now! He 's faced the
settin' sun

On County Road an' gone away, like all the others
done

Long years before, with nary thought of what they
raily owed

To her as "watched their smallest want" an' nursed
'em 'til they growed;

It 'pears t' me he's startin' jist when others gittin'
through,

An' goin' t' find it mighty hard an' mighty awk'ard,
too;

An' yit I've got abidin' faith that she who's gone
Above
Will he'p him with her mother-prayers an' thankful-
ness and love!

A DREAM.

LAST night I dreamed—*such* a bitter dream!
The house was hollow and sad and still,
The blinds were closed to the golden gleam
Of the morning sun, and the heavy chill
Of recent sorrow was all about—
The flowers and all bespoke the gloom—
Our friends crept stealthily in and out,
And some one sobbed in another room!
When all had left and the silence grew,
I crept alone to our romping place
Where truant beams came wandering through
And lighted the smile on a little face.

To-day I waked! Oh, the world was still!—
And all of the light of my life gone out,
And love and its promises vanished, 'til
I heard the children, their laugh and shout,
Their noisy greetings, and faces bright
Played peek-a-boo in my doorway, then
I knew it was all but a dream last night,
And life and love were the same again!
To-day I've toiled with a better cheer—
With lesser care how my fortune fares—
With greater thought of my blessings here,
And greater thanks for the love He spares.

AUGUST DAYS.

SOMETHING in the August haze calls the aimless rover

Back along the beaten ways that skirt the crimson clover,

Back where childhood used to dream

Over many a fairy theme—

Back to lie beside the stream and dream the old dreams over.

Back to lie upon the banks, and see the sky-fleece skipping

Overhead in endless ranks, and watch the kingbird dipping—

Hear the bees among the flowers—

Birds a-chatter in their bowers—

Heedless of the idle hours, slipping—slipping—slipping—

Back to stand upon the hills where August's harvest measure

Stands in golden shocks and spills its hoard with reckless pleasure;

Back where August, drunk with wine,

Listless with excesses fine,

Begs a helping hand of mine to stow away her treasure.

Something in the August haze makes a man to ponder,
August's golden harvest days bid him cease to wander—

Bid him from the world of men,
From the world of Now to Then—
Back to friends and home again, and harvest fields off
yonder!

THE FAILURE.

THAT man has failed?
So I have heard,
But, note you, those who pass him by
All greet him with a friendly word
And wish him well, and meet his eye
With friendly glance. It seems to me
In all Life's lack of friends, and stress
Of woe, to have such friends must be
The highest form of real success.

That man has failed?
Well, even so—
We 'll grant that sordid gold has not
Poured out on him in ceaseless flow,
Nor fame or glory been his lot;
But still he loves each bud that grows
And reads the message that it brings—
We cannot say he 's failed, who knows
And understands these little things.

“KETCHUP.”

WHILST rollin' 'round the city streets in my new
auto car
An' puttin' on a lot of lugs like poets allus are
That 's moved t' town *an' got a job*, there 's heaps o'
things that come
T' feller's eyes an' ears an' *nose* that make him think o'
hum.

Like yisterday on Avenoo, when sudden-like my nose
Jist caught the smell o' sumthin' sweet as enny
climbin' rose—
It wa'n't perfume ner nuthin' else that 's ennywise
akin—
'T was straight from some one's kitchen where they 's
ketchup bilin' in!

I s'pose it come from some place of the "'partment
dwellin'" sort,
Where folks ain't got a kettle that 'll hold above a
quart;
An' where they call it "catsup," which it allus seemed
t' me,
Profaned this tasteful product as 't was never meant
to be!

" Ketchup "

An' yit I 'm mighty thankful for the smell of it that
come

T' make me think o' mother an' September days at
hum—

It took me back t' Swazy 'fore I growed t' be a man,
An' mother made her ketchup on a hullsale sort o'
plan.

I recollect her method an' I really ain't no right
Withholdin' from my fellow-men a thing of sich de-
light:

You choose the best termaters that the hired he'p kin
find

An' bile 'em in a kettle of the "*opulenter*" kind.

An' then y' got t' strain it an' again y' bile it down,
An' throw a bag o' spices in an' slosh 'em all aroun',
An' keep a-bilin' of it 'twell it 's good an' proper
thick,

Then bottle it an' cool it off—*an' run an' hide it quick!*

Ah, trimmin's fitten for a King! Why, tellin' of it
here

Jist fairly takes me back again fer all o' twenty year,
Afore I ever dreamed o' town, er smoked a good
seegar,

Er ever et in restaraws—*er drove an auto car!*

THE VOID IN TO-DAY.

THE sun is shining just as bright,
The flowers blooming just as sweet,
The lilt and laughter just as light
As ever in the village street.

The friendly doors are open wide,
With little children there at play—
The ones I romped and walked beside
And loved and coddled yesterday.

The heart of youth beats just as fast,
With just as much of lilt and rhyme—
The shadows are the same that cast
Across my path last even'time.

The merry world it bowls along
Upon its strange, mysterious way,
A half in sorrow, half in song,
The same to-day as yesterday.

And yet—and yet—there 's something gone!
A happy smile, a bit of cheer,
A friendly word to spur me on
I listen for and cannot hear.

His friendly door to-day is crossed
With sombre black of grim portend,
And Silence whispers I have lost
God's rarest gift to man—*a friend!*

AN OLD MAN SAID:

YOU don't know as well as me
How your blessin's scatter—
You ain't old enuff, y' see,
Prob'ly that 's the matter.
Prob'ly that 's the reason you
Have sich happy hours,
Thinkin' all the skies are blue,
All the world is flowers.
Bimeby perhaps you 'll be
Lonesomer an' sadder,
And without a friend, like me,
Only jist your shadder.

Shadders is the closest friends
Not exceptin' brothers—
Never fools y' nor p'tends
Like the most the others;
Allus with y' hand in hand
Fair or stormy weather—
Allus struck me kind o' grand
How we stick together!
When you 're mad and argify
Gittin' mad and madder,
Still there 's one a-standin' by—
That 'll be your shadder!

An Old Man Said

Once I had a special friend—
Jist a common fiddle,
Bows upon her curlin' end,
Ribbons 'round her middle;
Lawsey, how I sawed her strings,
"Trainin' Day" and "Crown Me,"
"Dixie Land" and lots o' things
Coaxin' friends around me!
Now she 's hushed! I could n't play
Even if I had her,
And the friends have gone away,
All excep' my shadder!

Once the childurn used t' climb
'Round my chair an' hug me,
Beggin' me for bits of rhyme—
Wool me 'round and tug me.
Now they 've gone and they 've forgot
All them oldtime glories,
Fiddle songs and, like as not,
All them rhymes and stories—
Gone away a-leavin' me
Lonesomer and sadder,
All alone excep' for—*see!*
There it is!—my shadder!

AN OLD SAYIN' OF MOTHER'S.

THE older that a body gits
The better, seems t' me,
He reckollects the folks an' jokes
An' things that *used* t' be;
Like other night, whilst settin' there
An' rompin' through the years,
An' driftin' on the back'urds way,
I swan, I heerd my mother say:
"Go wash yer neck an' ears!"

It took me back fer forty years,
An' I's a boy again,
With same dislike fer water that
Was natural to me *then*;
I seemed t' feel my speerit rise,
An' feel my boyish tears
A-rollin' down in same ol' way,
Like when my mother used t' say:
"Go wash yer neck an' ears!"

Clean *neck an' ears*, you reckollect,
Was purt' nigh disgrace—
There wa'n't no sense in washin' 'cept
Perhaps a body's *face*!

We used t' think that mas was made
To add to boyish keers,
An' stand around in bossin' way,
When boys was tireddest, an' say:
"Go wash yer neck an' ears!"

An' yit I'll warrant that to-night
You'd like t' go to bed
In same ol' room, with locust bloom
A-droppin' overhead
On shingle roof, an' hold yer breath
With all your boyish fears,
An' hear yer mother softly creep
Upstairs an' ask y': "Gone to sleep?—
Did y' wash yer neck an' ears?"

DECORATION DAY AT SWAZY.

"BLEEDIN'-HEART" an' "snowball" time allus
takes me back a spell—
'Minds me when the army wuz, an' all them "Buck-
tail" boys that fell
Fightin' in the Wilderness front o' Spots-yl-van-i-a,
Slashin' on t'ords Richmond in that keerless, reckless
sorter way
"Bucktails" had all durin' the war, that made 'em
sich a rickord; then
Mind the day they brung 'em back t' Swazy there—
an' home again!
Last o' May, it wuz, an' God fair seemed t' glorify
them parts—
Jist the time of "snowball" bloom, an' violets an'
"bleedin'-hearts."

Mind it jist like yisterday! It seemed they wa'n't a
house in town
Did n't have its shutters drawed an' tears an' crepe a-
streamin' down,
Mournin' fer the dead within, fathers, brothers—boys
an' men—
Heroes, if they'd had the chanct, would gone an' done
the same again!

Did n't waste much tears them times, ner do much
sorrowin', becuz
Sorrowin' wuz common then, an' tears the cheapest
things that wuz!
Laid the boys in Swazy there, where all had played
their simple parts
'Fore the war, an' kivered 'em with "snowball"
bloom an' "bleedin'-hearts."

"Bleedin'-heart" an' "snowball" time! It means a
heap more now than then!
Seems like Swazy fokes jist wait fer springtime when
they bloom again;
Seems like they jist cherish 'em an' rear 'em up with
tender care
Hopin' that they'll breathe their love on all them
"Bucktails" sleepin' there!
Fifty years ain't made no odds, if anything them
flowers grow
Sweeter now than what they did when war-times wuz,
so long ago—
Long about the last o' May Nature uses all her arts,
Seems t' me, in paintin' 'em—the "snowball" bloom
an' "bleedin'-hearts."

Decoration Day cums on, I swan, no matter where I
be,
Close my eyes an' reckolect ol' Swazy days an' I kin
see
Same old pay-rade formin' there beneath the spreadin'
maples' shade,
Headed by "Old Ned," the hawss Cap Crawford
caught on Early's raid;

Ol' man Putnam, he cums next, ffin' in his quaint ol'
way

'Zackly like he fided the boys from there to Spots-yl-
van-i-a!

Then the village folks cum next a-playin' of their
lovin' parts,

Souls plum full o' love an' tears an' arms piled up with
"bleedin'-hearts!"

“JIST ABOUT NOW.”

“JIST about now” is the time I mean,
When August dozes an’ slips her hold—
Trees sort o’ weary of stayin’ green
An’ switch their colors to red an’ gold;
Jist on the line betwixt summer an’ fall,
When harvest comes an’ the thrashers run—
Time when the fields go to rest, for all
’S if they ’re wore out with the work they ’ve
done.

“Jist about now” when the only thing
A man regrets is he was n’t built
Winged, with feathers, t’ fly an’ sing
A song of praise like a whipperwilt,
Pee-wee bird or a common crow—
An’ nuther one of ’em sings a lot!
Yet they *sing* so ’s ’t the Lord ’ll know
They ’re doin’ their best with the tools they ’ve
got!

“Jist about now,” when the dreams y’ dream,
The thoughts y’ think an’ the things y’ see
Lookin’ back through the years, all seem
Sweeter, lots, than they used t’ be;

“Jist about now,” when your mem’ries start
An’ lead y’ back’urds with willin’ feet—
Time that mellers a feller’s heart
Like summer mellers a “punkin sweet.”

“Jist about now” is the time I mean,
But pin me down an’—well, I ’ll confess
August, draped in her gold an’ green
Ain’t nothin’ *extry* for loveliness;
Any time o’ the year is prime—
December, May, an’ the rest—I ’low
Any time that y’ sing a rhyme
It fits the best to the theme of Now!

ENFORCED FRIENDSHIP.

I S'POSE the run of people are constructed some like
me,
A-findin' fault and grumblin' at everything they see,
An' wishin' this an' t' other thing was more like *so* an'
thus

As we 'd allowed t' make it if He 'd left the job t' us.

But lately I 've been thinkin' an' a-weighin' "pro" an'
"con,"

An' eyein' Life perspective-like, without no glasses
on,

An' I 've about concluded that I 'd orto change my
gait,

For Life is crowded more with love than what it is with
hate.

Now Hiram Smeed I never liked, an' could n't stand
like some

Who overlook a feller bein' Presbyterium,

But when I had the ager an' the yellor janders too,

I 'm dogged if Hiram was n't jist the man t' pull me
through!

Nor Henry Carver was n't no espeshul friend o' mine,

For bein' Democratic wa'n't adzackly in my line,

But when the Sheriff levied an' I sort o' lost my ho't,

'T was Henry Carver helped me by a-backin' up my
note!

An' Peter Scott's another that I never liked—don-blame

His picture! I was Union side an' he against the same—

When my ol' war wound opened I could stood it, yes sir-e-e-e—

If that ol' rebel had n't whittled crutches out for me!

A SURE CURE FOR GENERAL DEBILITY.

WHEN a feller 's all stove up
Physically, just hangin' on
Tooth an' nail, an' wishin' he 's
Either well or dead an' gone,
Then it allus coaxes back
Feller's youth an' feller's smile,
Jist t' take a pole an' fish
Up an' down ol' Twenty-mile.

Dig his angleworms hisself—
Extry fat—an' cut a pole,
Then steal off an' head for some
Old established fishin' hole—
Through the wheatfield, shoulder deep,
Where the larks an' swallows skim,
T'ords the crick where troubles an'
Aches an' pains won't foller him.

Scramble up ol' grassy banks—
Down 'em, too—an' wade the run,
Things a man with roomatiz
Had n't orter *never* done!
Straddle logs an' crawl around
Under snags, an' in an' through—
Things an ablebodied man,
Sound an' healthy, *could n't* do!

A Sure Cure for General Debility 141

Set beside some hole an' fish
Half the day, a-feelin' prime,
More than half asleep, without
Bait ner nothin' half the time!
Not a fish, as like as not!—
Mebbe not a bite, but, look,
See the old-time memories
Nosin' 'round the feller's hook!

"TYFOID-BLUES."

I N the little black satchel Doc Folinsbee kep'
Beside him wherever he went,
There was some pill or powder for everything 'cep'
The one that Doc *could n't* invent!—
"This here one 's for janders and *that* one for chills,"
He'd tell us, "an' that one for *fun*;
I 'low I've got some sort o' powder or pills
For everything goin'—'cept *one*."
Then he'd sort o' square off in his hull-hearted way
An' air his perfessional views,
"Our science," says he, "cures everything most,
Exceptin', perhaps, it's an' allfired dost
Of ol'-fashioned tyfoid-blues!"

The symptoms there 's no one on earth kin explain—
There 's no one on earth seems t' know!
Your grumblin' stands at a hundred an' ten,
An' your speerits drop sixty below!
It seems t' be more than your heart kin endure,
This bendin' your back to the rod,
An' then 'fore y' know you git cussèd an' you're
Disputin' contentment with God!
There 's nothin' around y' seems anyway bright,
An' trubbles surround y' by twos—

You 're 'fraid that you 're dyin' then afraid that y'
ain't,
 An' livin', itself, seems t' be a *complaint*—
 That 's ol'-fashioned tyfoïd-blues!

I ain't never had 'em but once in my day,
 An' then when I visuted Sue—
 Our dorter 'ats marrit—an' she 's livin' way
 In Pontiac, Michigan, too!
 I stood it first rate over Sunday an' then
 I found I had trubble t' sleep,
 An' kep' gittin' worse 'til I 'd give up a ten
 T' hear Myra's ginny hens “cheep!”
 I packed up my satchel an' hit 'er for home
 An' dropped Sue a pustal: “Excuse
 This writin' an' hurry, I know that it 's not
 A *fatherly* partin', but, dorter, I 've got
 The ol'-fashioned tyfoïd-blues!”

AN ANNIVERSARY.

SIGNS of Aprile comin' on—
Runnin' sap an' them blamed on
Robins chirpin' seems t' cheer
Feller's heart an' inn'ards *here!*
What y' might call happy-sad
Days of mem'ries bad an' glad,
Plungin' country nayborhoods
Into reminiscint moods
With their dadburned magic! Law,
Just last evenin' paw an' maw
Set an' talked there, head-t'-head,
When the rest had gone t' bed;
Only ketched a word or so
"—That was fifty years ago!"

"Fifty years—" an' then looked down
On that button, rusty brown,
On his vest he allus wears—
"Braden Post, the G. A. R's."—
Wizzen choked an' eyes growed dim—
Maw was purt' nigh proud as him!
Then they both looked in the blaze
Conjurin' up fergotten days
Like enuff, like old folks does—
Days of when the army was;
Paw t' see the fight again,
Charge an' rush that he saw then—

Don't know what maw's thoughts was of,
Fears, perhaps, an' soldier's love.

Fifty years ago! Why she—
'Cordin' to her age—would be
Just about like buds in May—
Timid buds that sort o' lay
Wishful-like, then bust in bloom
Drenchin' things in sweet perfume;
War nigh bruk her heart, an' yet
Threwed some roses, dewey-wet,
At him when he marched away—
“*First real wound!*” he used t' say!
Draped his musket with 'em, too—
Watched him 'til he shrunk from view,
Then went home dry-eyed an' hid
Grief like wimmin mostly did.

Fifty years, an' now they 're gray!—
Hand in hand they 've gone their way,
Fought their fights an' mostly won
Like paw's reg'mint allus done!—
Shared their luck of every sort
Like good comrades allus ort.
Guess they 've earned their right to set
Talkin' things they can't ferget;
Yes, an' wa'n't I glad last night
That the spell was 'zackly right—
Glad there wa'n't nobody near,
No one there t' interfere—
Glad the clock ticked soft an' slow,
'Count of fifty years ago!

KITCHEN INTERRUPTIONS.

(This bein' about the way things sound when ma is bakin' an' Missus Granby jist draps in t' git a receipt fer frostin', an' the childern are hangin' 'round the kitchen table sort o' hankerin'-like.)

WELL, first I take sugar—leetle more 'n a cup—
“Ma, kin I lick the dish?”

An' half cup o' water an' stir 'em both up—

“Ma, kin I lick the dish?”

In stewpan or sumthin', an' boil 'twell they 'hair'

Like boiled sugar does, takin' plenty of care

T' see it don't burn like it's apt t' do—There!

Now hain't you done it! *I wish*

You young'uns behaved! An' then take the whites—

“Ma, kin I lick the dish?”

Of couple of eggs an' beat the daylights—

“Ma, kin I lick the dish?”

Out o' *them* 'twell you're tired, an' stir sugar in

An' add your vanilly an' stir it agin—

Be keerful, Mis' Granby, don't git it too thin!—

“Ma, kin I lick the dish?”

. . . Sh-h-h-h .

“Ma, kin I lick the dish?”

DIVINE SERVICE.

THERE was n't a sound of an organ note,
But up in the elms was a yellèr bird
That raised its head an' it swelled its th'oat
In as sweet a chime as I ever heard;
The woods woke up an' the chipmunks chirred
Forever an' all like they limned the hymns
For them that come fer the gospel word
An' tuk their pews on the lowest limbs.

The blackbird first with his long-tail coat
An' fancy vest with its store-made fit—
The oriole with his yellèr th'oat,
The lark an' th'ush an' the gray tom-tit—
An' then the crow—*he 's a hippercrit,*
An' holds that stealin' 's the best o' jokes!—
An' then the sparrows crep' in an' sit
T'gether, fer all like the humble folks!

The meetin' started, o' course, with song—
“The timbrel call” as the Baptist says—
A sort of melody, loud an' strong,
That filled the world with the Father's praise;
An' then, as in keepin' with holy days,
The choir stopped an' there come a hush,
An' God spoke out through the silent ways
From His pulpit hid in the hawthorn brush.

An' oh the sermon I heard that day!

A sermon straight from the shoulder, *square*,
That teach'd the gospel of Love, I say,

'Twell Presbyteriums can't compare—

Ner Baptists nuther!—and I declare

It made me penitent, *yes sir-e-e-e*,

T' think, that of all of the faithful there,

The only sinner of all was *me!*



“ The Weariness of Childhood ”

THE WEARINESS OF CHILDHOOD.

I T is so very, very far
From breakfast time to Fast Asleep!
The mountains in the orchard are
So very, very high and steep!

The fences that I cannot climb
I have to go around to play,
And that 's so very far, sometime
I fear that I shall lose my way!

The water in the horses' trough
Is like the ocean blue to me,
With apple blossoms sailing off—
It tires one to watch the sea!

When mother calls me in from play
And tells me I must wash and go
An errand, that 's so far away
I guess that you could never know!

The kitchen steps are high for me—
The cookie jar is up so tall!—
They did n't mean that they should be
For little folks like me at all.

And when I go to bring the cow
 I have to go so far that then
The sun, that shines so brightly now,
 Is gone when I get back again.

So when you stop to think of it—
 How tiny are our steps, and slow—
It is n't strange, a single bit,
 That little children tire so!

ANALOGY.

A WAKE with the day and a smile at the sun,
A moment of play and then toiling begun;
A failure at first and then a success—
A moment of pleasure and one of distress—
A plenty of work and a little of play
Is all of the sum of a joyous day;
Then weariness comes with the darkness, and then
Good-bye to the striving and—home again.

A babe in the world of myst'ry untold,
A moment of love and a childhood of gold—
An end to the pathway to manhood's estate—
A challenge to Fortune, a battle with Fate—
A plenty of pleasure, a little of pain—
A little of loss and a plenty of gain—
The coming of Age and its weariness, then
Good-bye to the living and—Home again!

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